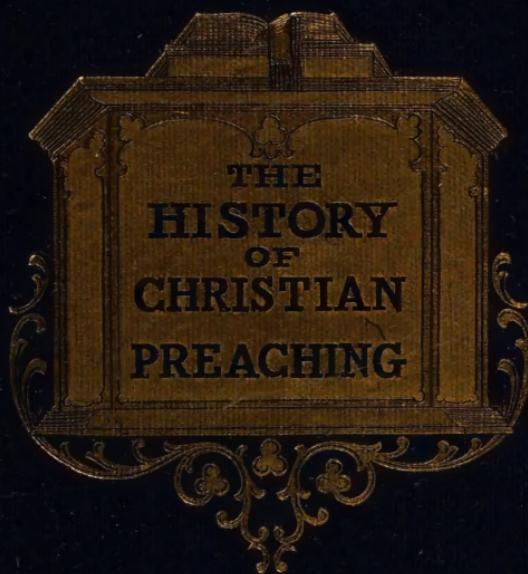


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THE
History
OF
Christian Preaching

BY
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“The Making of the Sermon,” “Public Worship”
“History of the English Bible,” etc.

*The true preacher can be known by this, that
he deals out to the people his life—life
passed through the fire of thought*

PHILADELPHIA

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PREFACE

To sketch the portraits of the few great preachers whose memory the world preserves would be a comparatively easy task. But this would do scant justice to our subject, and to the multitude of men, often very obscure and most of them entirely forgotten, who have acted well their part in fulfillment of our Lord's command to preach the gospel to every creature. My present purpose is to show that the voice of the Christian preacher has never ceased to be a power in the world from the days of the apostles until now. We catch its echoes in the controversies of Christendom; in the ecclesiastical movements of the ages; in the reformations by which religion has been purified and renewed; and in the great missionary advances of the church universal.

To pursue the course of history for the last two thousand years is to trace the real prophetic succession as it has delivered its message to the centuries. To the life of the nation and of the race the preacher has ministered, for his appeal has been to his own generation. He has dealt with the present duty as well as with the final destiny of the men and women about him; with their relation to the life that now is as well as to the life which is to come. So the history of Christian preaching cannot be studied apart from the history of the Christian church and the history of Christendom at large. For this reason I have sought

to restore the preacher to his environments, national as well as religious ; and to consider him as one figure among many in the age in which he lived and the people to whom he spoke.

In the history of Christian preaching the famous orators have been few when compared with the host of men who, in the words of Paul, have come not with excellency of speech but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. Fascinated by the glamour of a score of splendid names, we have, I fear, been unfair to this great army of Christian witnesses who have served their own generation by the will of God, and have given to the pulpit her just claim to occupy the throne of eloquence. To recognize their work and worth is to give to preaching its true place in the history of Christendom and in the great enterprises by which in the last two thousand years the world has been made better. I shall count myself happy if the reader of this volume comes to recognize this broader and more lasting influence of the Christian pulpit.

T. H. P.

ROCHESTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, July 1, 1903.

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THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN PREACHING

I

PROPHET AND SYNAGOGUE

THE roots of Christian preaching lie far back of the Christian era. They are struck in the soil of the Old Testament, and, deeper even than that, in the one common human heart. It is sometimes claimed that the pulpit is almost peculiar to Christianity, and Gibbon affirms that "the custom of preaching had not been introduced into the temples of antiquity, nor the ears of monarchs invaded by the harsh sounds of popular eloquence, until the pulpits were filled with sacred orators who possessed some advantages unknown to their profane predecessors." But this is rather the sneer of the partisan than the statement of the historian.

Preaching was not new to the world when Jesus came proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom. To spread truth by the spoken word was a method too easy and too natural for the world to discover it only when our Lord opened his mouth and taught. There is a persuasiveness in personal presence, in the sound of a human voice, in the expression of the countenance, in the quick sympathy between speaker and hearer, which

from the first made the orator a necessary and popular element in human life. "He subjects all things to eloquence,"¹ words still to be deciphered on the base of a Greek statue, find their counterpart in the exclamation of the African savage when David Livingstone read to him Isaiah, "He was a fine man, he knew how to speak." That our Lord did not leave one written sentence is not more true than that the philosophers of Greece spread their doctrine by means of oral instruction. "I would rather," said Socrates, "write upon the hearts of living men than upon the skins of dead sheep." Preaching is human as well as divine, "the strongest and most enduring instrumentality in the world, because the Spirit of God and the spirit of man are in it and wield it."²

The greatest preachers have been the most thoroughly human, men of like passions with their hearers. For this reason the history of preaching is often a vivid reflection of the times, and the preacher himself, in a marked measure, possesses the one touch of nature which makes the whole world kin. Chrysostom, in Constantinople, is the man of the crowd as well as the man for the crowd; because Wycliffe yearns over the multitudes of his fellows perishing for lack of knowledge he sends his simple preachers into the country lanes and market places; Luther in the first year of his married life will have his Katie sit with him while he prepares his sermon; old father Latimer is the newspaper of London; Bunyan comes by his death in his eagerness to reconcile an offended father and his erring son; Thomas Chalmers owes his power not more to his

¹ Hatch, "Hibbert Lectures," p. 99. ² Hoppin, "Homiletics," p. 25.

eloquence than "to the activity and quantity of his affections"; Edward Irving trudges along the road, bound for a clerical meeting, bearing the bundle of a poor weary woman whom he has overtaken; Spurgeon visiting his orphanage is as full of glee as any of the boys gathering about him; and great-hearted Phillips Brooks gives up days of his vacation that he may care for a dying colored lad in Boston, a stranger to him, save indeed as he is the follower of the divine Elder Brother who came not to be ministered unto but to minister. This rich vein of humanity has rarely failed to be a strong element in the nature of the great Christian preacher; and it has given an added acceptance to his words as he has said: "Unto you, O men, do I cry, and my voice is unto the sons of men."

The popularity of the pulpit is in part due to the popularity of oratory all the world over and all time through; and the power of the preacher to the fact that at his best and truest he is essentially a man among men.

The history of Christian preaching, as we have it today, may be said to begin with the Hebrew prophets. Before them there were indeed many messengers of God who by a free use of the term may be called preachers: Enoch, who prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of his holy ones to execute judgment upon all";¹ "Noah, a preacher of righteousness";² Aaron, who could speak well, and yet was so inferior in spirit and character to his brother Moses, himself rising to sublime prophetic heights.³ Sometimes the message has come by the lips of base and of unworthy messengers; yet, in one or another way and in every age, no

¹ Jude 14. ² 2 Peter 2:5. ³ Exod. 4:14; Deut. 32, 33.

doubt there have been men who "spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit."¹

With the prophets, however, preaching became an art for which men were trained, and from their days until the present there has been an unbroken prophetic succession, a continuous line of men who through the medium of human speech have brought to the world the mind and will of God. Perhaps it would be true to say that the prophetic era began with Samuel. The ark had fallen into the hands of the Philistines; the priesthood had become vile and was now practically extinct; the nation needed instruction in spiritual truth. The word of Jehovah was rare in those days, there was no vision of God in the institution which was shamed by unholy hands; and so Samuel came to lay stress not on burnt offerings and sacrifices, but on obedience and righteousness.² To insist on these was one mission of the prophet.

I. We study first, then, the preacher as prophet.

1. The meaning of the word prophet is very suggestive of the prophetic office. Although the etymology is disputed, it has been generally held that the Hebrew *nabi* is derived from a verb, *naba*, which is traced to a root signifying to boil over or bubble up, and its passive form suggests that the speaker is moved by impulses over which he has not entire control. That Saul³ should be among the prophets was as surprising to himself as to his friends and neighbors, and his excited and incoherent utterances, sometimes not rising above the raving of frenzy, are characteristic of the man whose moral character was so often at the mercy of bursts of transient

¹ 2 Peter 1:21.

² 1 Sam. 3:1; 15:22.

³ 1 Sam. 10:9-12.

feeling, bad or good. The later meaning—one who speaks or sings under a divine afflatus—points to the growth of the office in self-control as well as to a clearer apprehension of its sacredness.¹ In the Greek the preposition *προ* compounded in the word *προφήτης*, and preserved in our prefix *pro*, means three things, one who speaks beforehand, one who speaks in public, and one who speaks in behalf of another. This three-fold meaning remains to-day in the office of the preacher, who with the clear vision of one who sees things as God sees them, and reads life in the light of the word, foretells the harvest of the deeds done in the body; who does not move men by the printed page written in the seclusion of the study, but by the human voice lifted up in the presence of his fellow-men; and who, finally, speaks directly the will of God, for he who occupies a Christian pulpit has no other mission than that of a messenger, dealing not with personal convictions and opinions but with the very word of the Highest. This meaning lingered long in our English speech and we find it in Piers Plowman:

Patriarchs and prophets
O preachers of God's worde.

It survives in our literature to-day in Jeremy Taylor's memorable treatise on "The Liberty of Prophesying," which means the liberty of preaching.

2. As to the prophet's office, it is evident that he

¹ "The meaning of the word *nabi* is still a matter of discussion. The most probable opinion seems to be that it means the bearer of a message,"—*Karl Budde*, "*Religion of Israel to the Exile*," p. 101. If this view is correct, the Hebrew and Greek derivations have much in common. See, *Davidson*, *Hastings' "Dictionary of the Bible,"* Art. "Prophets and Prophecy," *Cornill*, "*The Prophets of Israel*," pp. 10, 11.

was one in whom the moral and spiritual elements prevailed over the ceremonial and ritualistic.

(1) Of old time God spoke unto the fathers by the prophets.¹ They taught the people in the ways of God. To do this was their first and chief office. This influence, rising with Samuel, is felt for righteousness when the new power—that of the king—comes to challenge the simplicity of the theocracy. When the kingdom of David is rent in twain, the prophet alike in Israel and in Judah was often the one man who stemmed the tide of godlessness, and, sometimes at the peril of his life, recalled the nation to its allegiance and Jehovah. To hold the scattered tribes to their loyalty and to nourish a hope of restoration,² and to lift up in the face of the outside world the promise of a light to lighten the Gentiles became the mission of the prophet during the long and dreary years of the captivity.

It is in this, his highest office, that the prophet is especially a model for the preacher.

(2) In addition to bringing the message of God to the people,³ which might be in the form of an announcement of something which was still future or might be simply an insistence upon the claims of Jehovah on the nation, the prophet perpetuated in records the word of God⁴ and at times went about teaching his law, while he also studied and preserved sacred music and poetry. His work was so far literary that he preserved the history of the nation and kept alive in the hearts of the people the dealings of God with them in earlier times, and so far æsthetic that, as taste developed, he

¹ Heb. 1:1. ² Ker, "Lectures on Preaching," pp. 22-25.

³ James, "The Message and the Messengers," p. 14. ⁴ 2 Chron. 17:9.

nourished the love for the arts of musical composition and preserved the strains which lifted the worshiper into communion with Jehovah.¹

(3) Under Samuel the schools of the prophets are heard of for the first time. At Ramah, which was his home, and at Gibeah, and later at Gilgal, Bethel, Jericho, and Mount Ephraim, gathered companies of men who seem to have been organized to preserve the inspiring history of the race and to keep alive their still more inspiring hope, to hold in awe the lawless and to afford a home to the outcast, while cultivating literature and music in so far as they were connected with the national religion.² The number of students at these schools of the prophets no doubt varied, as did their offices, but we may infer that they belonged to no special class, represented no hereditary line, and in general coming from families in humble circumstances, commanding no sort of endowment on which to live, were required to exercise frugality and self-denial.³ At times we read of miracles worked for their maintenance, although as a rule it would seem that the fields about them sufficed for their simple needs. The prophet Elijah passed from one to another of these schools and kept them under his eye. When the time came for him to be translated he seems to have made a final progress among them, accompanied by Elisha, his successor in the prophetic office, to whom it was given to reprove the skeptical temper of the students of Jericho

¹ Hoppin, p. 21.

² Stanley, "History of the Jewish Church," Chap. 17. See also, Gwatkin, Hastings' "Dictionary of the Bible"; "The Prophet in the New Testament," Vol. IV., p. 127.

³ 2 Kings 4:38-41.

who refused to believe that the Spirit of Jehovah had indeed caught up Elijah his master until for three days they had sought him in vain among the mountains. Then Elisha enjoyed the luxury (not unknown among instructors in schools of theology in later times) of saying to the discomfited band when they returned from their fruitless search, "Did I not say unto you, Go not?"

A word as to the prophetic succession. Although, as we have just said, there was no prophetic tribe or family, yet the line which began with Samuel would seem to have continued down to the appearance of John the Baptist, on whom rested the last beams of the sunset and the first flush of the dawn. Nor did the succession really cease with him. It has not ceased to this day. Every preacher is not a prophet. The preacher may be scholarly, industrious, and devoted, and yet he may lack the distinct prophetic gift. This is the element of directness, such as we see in Elijah when abruptly he breaks in on King Ahab in his ivory palace at Jezreel with the startling cry, "As the Lord of Israel liveth before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." Isaiah and Paul, Chrysostom, Savonarola, Luther, Latimer, Bunyan, and Whitefield are men in the true prophetic succession. Not all the Lord's people are prophets, but, as we are to see in this volume, the succession has never failed. This succession is not the power of God transmitted by physical contact. It is not in a line of priests. It is a succession of prophets, a broken and scattered but very real prophetic line. John was the successor of Elijah's spirit. "In the spiritual birth Luther was the offspring of the mind of St. Paul. Mind

acts on mind, whether by ideas or character. Herein is the spiritual succession.”¹

After the return of the people from the captivity² synagogues sprang up in all parts of Palestine in which, Sabbath by Sabbath, there were regular expositions of the law and the prophets. We can readily understand how large a part they had played in the religious life of the exiles, separated by many long and desolate leagues from Jerusalem, whose choked wells and ruined temples wrung anguish into their cup as by the waters of Babylon they sat down and wept when they remembered Zion. Once more back in their own land, they would find that the synagogue had memories of its own, and before long almost every town or village possessed one or more in which the people met for common worship.

II. Let us glance, then, at the preacher in the synagogue.

I. For us the building itself has a special interest. In form it was oblong and within was entirely bare of images or paintings.³ At the end farthest from the door there was a low platform, furnished with a desk for the leader of the meeting, and from which the Scriptures were read and the discourse delivered. Back of the platform stood the ark or coffer containing copies of the law. The predominant note in the edifice was simplicity. Its features suggest the congregational form of church rather than the episcopalian. The synagogue, as distinguished from the temple, was designed for the common worship of the people.⁴ Possi-

¹ F. W. Robertson. ² B. C. 445.

³ Edersheim, “Life and Times of Jesus,” Chap. I, p. 434.

⁴ Jacob, “Ecclesiastical Polity of the New Testament,” p. 190.

bly it furnished the actual model for the first Christian church buildings.

2. The service in the synagogue was in keeping with the building. It was very simple. At first it consisted of the reading, by regular ministers, of the Pentateuch, to which, some two hundred years before the Christian era began, the Prophets were added. There were also paraphrases and comments which would be needed as the sacred language became unfamiliar and the early history of the Hebrew race remote.

When Christianity came to be preached the synagogues were no longer uniformly simple. Many of them were large and magnificently adorned.¹ The paraphrase or comment had grown into an exposition, sometimes of considerable length. The homily or sermon was here in germ. It was inevitable that abuses would come. In the time of Jesus the sermon was too often debased by sensational elements. The people flocked to listen to their favorite preacher—to him of good figure and pleasant expression and melodious voice, of fluent tongue and speech sweet as honey. His self-assurance was proof against nervousness, and he aimed, above everything else, to be attractive. Parables and stories and allegories, witticisms and absurd legends and amusing play on words were his staple, whether he professed to lay the emphasis of his discourse on teaching or on preaching, to be homiletical or explanatory in his address. In the history of preaching, as elsewhere, there is nothing new under the sun.

But the synagogue address would not all, or indeed chiefly, be of this character. It would more frequently

¹ Edersheim, "Life of Jesus the Messiah," Chap. I, p. 446.

meet the spiritual needs of the worshipers. To the apostles and first preachers of Christianity the opportunity was more than once given, in this way and in free discourse, to set forth the gospel.

Here, where we catch sight of the sermon in its inception, it may be well that we glance at the contrast which our study has suggested between the priest and the prophet.

1. The offices are contrasted, inasmuch as the priest interprets man to God, the prophet God to man. The priest is vicarious, and acts for the people; the prophet is popular, and one of the people.

2. The methods are contrasted. The priest appeals largely to the eye, to type and symbol and image; the prophet mainly to the ear, for "faith cometh by hearing."

3. The places in which the people worship are contrasted. The one prefigures the church or cathedral, with its nave and aisles for the congregation, its chancel for the altar and the offices of the priest, recalling the temple. The other anticipates the meeting-house, the very name suggested by the synagogue. In the temple there was no pulpit; in the synagogue there was no altar; and in proportion as the first conception has been made prominent in Christian worship the sermon has fallen into the shade. "We call our churches 'temples,'" writes John Ruskin,¹ "Now you know, or ought to know, they are not temples. They have never had, never can have, anything whatever to do with temples. They are 'synagogues'—'gathering-places,' where you gather yourselves together as an assembly." The distinction between temple and synagogue, cathe-

100 anti-catholic assembly

¹ "The Crown of Wild Olives," p. 58.

dral and meeting-house is radical. "The altar," declared Archbishop Laud,¹ "is the greatest place of God's residence upon earth, greater than the pulpit, for there 'tis *Hoc est corpus meum*, This is my body; but in the other it is at most but *Hoc est verbum meum*, This is my word."² It is another English bishop who puts the matter in the way which will better commend itself to our judgment when he says: "The Christian minister is never called priest. The only priesthood recognized in the New Testament is the priesthood of Christ, as the fulfillment of all the types of the old law and the spiritual priesthood of all believers, whether clergy or laity."³ The prophet stands among the lights and shadows of Hebrew history as a minister of righteousness. At times he falls from his high estate, and often his voice is faint and fearful; but the evidence is conclusive that from Samuel, with his claim for moral purity, to John the Baptist, with his demand for repentance, God never suffered the line of prophetic succession to be wholly lost. The preservation of the line of prophets is still in his hands. "A man can make a priest, you have but to drill him, to discipline him, and lo! he is made. You cannot make a prophet. God must make him."⁴ John Stuart Mill pays his tribute of respect to the "inestimably precious organized institution, the Order (if it may be so called) of Prophets," who kept up in Palestine "the antagonism of influences which is the only security for continued progress"; and one of the truest prophets of our times, the late Bishop

¹ "Jacob," p. 99.

² Mozley, "Essays, Historical and Theological," Chap. I, p. 170.

³ J. J. S. Perowne, 1887.

⁴ Principal Fairbairn.

Fraser, of Manchester, England, (1885) insists that "this age wants, and is prepared to receive not the priest but the prophet."

"The decided revival of the use of the prophets by the Christian pulpit" is a feature of our times to which Dr. George Adam Smith has called attention.¹ The development of social life, the change from agricultural to commercial conditions, the rise and growth of the city, the need that with larger freedom we cherish honor and equity in our dealings the one with the other, the regard on which the prophets insist for the interests of the poorer classes of the community, and above all else, because at the root of all else, the intense feeling of our close relation to God, leading to a realization as intense of our brotherhood with the men and women about us made in his image and likeness, these are matters with which the preaching of the Hebrew prophets concerns itself, and with which, inspired by our faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ, our preaching must concern itself not less.

¹ "Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament."

II

THE PREACHING OF JESUS

THERE can be no question as to the importance which Jesus attached to preaching. When he said to his disciples, "As ye go, preach," he only expressed in a command a duty which he had already illustrated in his own ministry. That ministry was largely an open air ministry. Not in the synagogue or even in the house were his most memorable words spoken. The hillside, the fisher's boat, the Galilean road, the slopes of Olivet, gave him all he needed. The fresh breeze seems to blow through his discourses yet, and the sun to play upon them ; the great green book of nature furnishes him with his illustrations ; the touch of the throng is on the fringe of his garment as he speaks. "An old decayed boat," said Latimer, advocating field preaching, "is as the goodly pulpit that our Saviour Christ had gotten him here ; a good preacher may declare the word of God sitting on a horse or preaching from a tree."

No doubt in many of its external features the preaching of Jesus was akin to the preaching of his time. That also took the form of teaching, as we have seen in dealing with the services of the synagogue. The familiar forms of address, the method of question and answer, the patience and even encouragement of interruption from his hearers, are still common to Oriental methods of public speech. Equally the abundant use

of illustrations, the pictures drawn from passing events, the habit of enforcing truth by a metaphor, or embodying it in a parable, are not peculiar to Jesus. The pages of the Talmud, the stories from the "Arabian Nights," the memory of some fluent narrator in the bazaars of Egypt or India, remind us how common all this is in the East to-day. "Thou shalt never get such a secret from me," says Launce, in "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," "but by a parable." In contrast with our colder if more logical forms of address is the varied and vivid robe, the coat of many colors, in which the Eastern speaker loves to clothe his discourse.

Yet from the very first the preaching of Jesus attracted extraordinary attention. If at twelve years of age he commanded the respect of the doctors of the law in the temple, equally true was it that the people all hung upon him listening, and that the common people heard him gladly.¹ We have now to inquire how this came about. Why did Jesus win universal hearing when he opened his mouth and taught? To answer this question we must examine more at length the preaching of Jesus.

I. We consider it, first, in its rhetorical setting.

1. It was extremely natural. (1) So unaffected was it, so entirely free of all artifice, that to speak of the eloquence of Jesus, still more of his elocution, seems almost profane. Rhetoric is an art, and came in time to play a very important part in the history of preaching. But the preaching of Jesus was unstudied. Alike the thought of his discourse and its language seem to flow from him without premeditation.²

¹ Luke 2:46; 19:48; Mark 12:37.

² Wendt, "The Teaching of Jesus," p. 107.

(2) In this his teaching contrasted with the teaching of the Pharisees and scribes. They magnified schools and systems.¹ Nature had no place in their estimation of things. "This multitude that knoweth not the law are accursed." "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"² And yet many of the most effective speakers of all time have resembled Jesus in this respect. Unlike the mere rhetorician or elocutionist, they have attracted little attention to themselves, and their speech has been so natural as to seem independent of art and almost at the command of the simplest of their hearers.

2. While there are profound depths in the truths Jesus taught, the form in which he expressed them was as clear as it was natural. Truth on his lips was simple rather than complex, objective rather than subjective.³ "While he is advancing doctrines so far transcending all deductions of philosophy, and opening mysteries that defy all human forms of explication, he is yet able to set his teachings in a form of simplicity that accommodates all classes of minds."⁴ In listening to him we are not conscious of any exaggeration. His thought was admirable for proportion and balance. The theologian has been apt to lay undue stress on some one doctrine. In his passion for that doctrine he has often been guilty of exaggeration. Athanasius flings down the gauntlet to all the world in his fierce advocacy of the Trinity; Luther loses his temper in his endeavor to save the truth which gave the keynote to the Protestant Reformation. Often the religious teacher has lost his appre-

¹ Edersheim, Vol. I., Chap. 18.

² John 7:14, 15.

³ Bushnell, "Nature and the Supernatural," Chap. 10.

⁴ Robert Robinson, "Works," Vol. I., p. 251.

ciation of the whole creed of Christendom in his enthusiasm for one particular article in it. Jesus saw things as they were and appraised them at their true value. "Little things always in his instruction appeared little. Harmless things he regarded as harmless. Great and important things only has he taught us to regard as great and important."¹

From the thought turn to the language of Jesus, with which indeed we are more especially concerned. To understand its elements analyze them. Take a copy of the Gospels and underscore every vivid word, every illustration which arrests your eye. The result will be such a treasury of poetical speech as can be found nowhere else in all literature. (1) The very words which he chooses are pictures in themselves. Simon the son of Jona became Cephas, the rock, and so the old name, recalling the historic past, is changed for one which holds in it the promise of the future of the church. The beatitudes, uttered in the Sermon on the Mount, are every one of them pictures a painter could put on his canvas: the poor in spirit inheriting the kingdom of heaven; those who hunger and thirst after righteousness and who shall be filled; the pure in heart who shall see God. (2) Our Lord had a marvelous skill in packing a truth into a sentence, a jewel to sparkle on the forefinger of time forever. How readily we recall them: "Where the treasure is there will the heart be also"; "Cast not pearls before swine." In his giving the father does not mistake the fish for the serpent, the egg for the scorpion: "Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you."

¹ Dwight, "Theology," Vol. II., p. 108.

(3) The similes of Jesus remain inimitable, "perfection beyond compare," as Tennyson called them. The world never tires of the story of the Prodigal. Each opening spring recalls the Sower going forth to sow. The Good Samaritan hangs on the walls of universal memory. "In answering the question, 'Who is our neighbour?' as one who stands in need of our assistance and whose wounds we can bind up, he has done more to humanize the thoughts and tame the unruly passions than all who have tried to reform and benefit mankind."¹

(4) The prodigious force of metaphors of which Carlyle speaks, and which he himself exemplified in his writings, is felt in the teaching of Jesus. John the Baptist is a reed shaken by the wind; the first disciples are called to be fishers of men; the ungrateful multitude whom he cherishes in his bosom, only to have them sting him at the last, is a generation of vipers; and the wily Herod is a fox. To the world he offers the bread and the water of life, but for himself, he lifts to his lips a cup of anguish and is baptized in the baptism of a death wherein all the waves and billows of lonely self-sacrifice go over him.

(5) The teaching of Jesus was often highly dramatic.² The little child first set in the midst of his disciples, then cradled in his arms, taught them the secret of true gentleness; and the basin and towel with which on bended knee he did the work of a slave, washing their feet, enforced the lesson of humility of which his whole life was the perpetual example. "If I, then, the Lord and the Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet."³

¹ Hazlitt.

² Matt. 18 : 2-6.

³ John 13 : 14.

(6) It is astonishing how even the imperfect record of his discourses which we have in the four Gospels reflects the time in which he lived, the land of his birth, youth, and manhood, and the people among whom he moved.

The Old Testament Scriptures were constantly on his lips; he recalls many a narrative from Hebrew history, the hierarchy in their narrowness and unfitness live as we follow his words, and the civil government by which the people were held in bondage. The little city is still seen perched on the hill, the stones in the road still cry out. We are in the homes of the people, where the woman leavens the meal and where the lost piece of money is sought and found. The farm is reproduced, with its wheat and tares; the plough turns up hid treasure; the rich man plans for bigger barns, but takes not God into his counsels; the ox and the ass led away to the watering teach a lesson of divine compassion. The fruit ripens, the laborers toil in the vineyard, the vine gives Jesus the text for the profoundest of all his discourses, and the lily bids us learn and believe in our Father's care for us. The birds of the air add their note to the same truth, that we are of more value than all the other works of God's hands; and pointing to the flock of sheep on the hillside, Jesus exhorts us to remember, what since he uttered it we have been so apt to forget, that a man is better than a sheep. The commonest objects often furnish the most precious analogies. The water in the well of Sychar suggests the draught of which drinking we shall thirst no more; the light dawning day by day reminds us that we are to be the lights of the world; and on the lips of Jesus, all

through his discourses, beginning with the discourse to Nicodemus, life itself is lifted on to a loftier range and fitted with a diviner meaning. It can never again be the same thing to live that it was before Jesus came. He has indeed made all things new.

So much we have said about the rhetorical setting of our Lord's discourses because we are thinking of him now as a preacher. But rich and varied as was his speech, there were other and more important elements in his sermons which need to be taken into account.

II. Foremost among these was the tone of authority with which he spoke. "He taught as one having authority."

1. In contrast with other teachers, he spoke in his own name. The prophet opened his address with, "Thus saith the Lord." The scribe declared, "It is written in the law." The apostle delivered his message "in the name of the Lord." But it was not so with Jesus. As one who needed no warrant from a greater than himself he prefaced his weightiest utterances with the simple words, "I say unto you."

In keeping with this claim for himself as the supreme and sufficient authority in matters of life and doctrine was his dogmatic method. He never said, "I think," "I believe," but, on the contrary, affirmed truth as beyond controversy.¹ "He does not speculate about God as a school professor, drawing out conclusions by practice in words and deeming that the way of proof." His teaching was practical, not theoretical. "He never argues or reasons as if he were seeking for truth and arriving at it by the ordinary processes. He simply as-

¹ Bushnell, "Nature and the Supernatural," Chap. 10.

serts and declares.”¹ The negative note is rarely heard. All is positive. “I am the way.” “I that speak unto thee am he.” “Thy sins are forgiven thee.” “This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.” For this tone of authority we find two reasons: First, his appeal to Scripture, and, secondly, his conscious relation to the Father. (1) He did not concern himself, as did other teachers of his time, with tradition. He did not address himself, as in all ages popular teachers have been tempted to do, to the passions of his hearers. His appeal was to the Scriptures. In the Gospel of Luke we catch the keynote of his ministry when in the synagogue at Nazareth he opened the book, and, reading from Isaiah, said, “This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears,”² and in the last chapter of the same Gospel the note is still the same, and the hearts of the disciples walking to Emmaus burn within them “while he talked with us by the way and opened to us the Scriptures.”³ This opening up of the Scriptures meant not the quoting of text after text as though there were any authority in mere words, but it meant that true exegesis which led out into the light hidden and subtle meanings, the heart and core of the passage to which he appealed. “Never,” says Ewald, “was there brought to the interpretation of holy Scriptures a deeper intuition, a more luminous discernment, a more penetrating intelligence.”

(2) Still more must we trace this tone of authority in the teaching of Jesus to his conscious relation to his Father. “All things have been delivered unto me of

¹ Horton, “The Teachings of Jesus,” p. 20.

² Luke 4:21. ³ Luke 24:32.

my Father; neither doth any know the Father save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him.”¹ “My teaching is not mine but his that sent me.” He himself lay back of the Scripture to which he appealed. His union with the Father was so close and so perfect that his teaching flowed from the heart of God himself. “The Word was with God, and the Word was God.”²

III. The immense influence exerted by the discourses of Jesus is further explained if we consider how deeply the preacher was interested in his hearers.³ He was the Son of Man not only because he was the ideal man, but also because he was in touch with humanity everywhere. “He lays his finger directly on the human heart, as it is found in every stage of culture and civilization.”⁴ As no other he could say, “I am a man and count nothing human foreign to me.” Neither before nor since his time has the world found any sympathy comparable to his. He spoke to the wants of men and to their woes as well as to their aspirations. He saw in every crowd that which brought the tears to his eyes. He knew what was in man. Suffering was inseparable from sin. The pity of it was that even in the basest and most shameless he saw the lines of that humanity which he himself perfectly embodied. The compassion of Jesus welled up from this divine knowledge and this divine love. “When I read the New Testament,” said Tennyson, “I am always amazed at the splendor of Christ’s purity and holiness and at his infinite pity.” It was this commingling of holiness and sympathy

¹ Matt. 11:27; John 7:16. ² John 1:1. ³ Wendt, p. 148.

⁴ Pressensé, “Life of Christ,” Book II., Chap. 5.

which opened for Jesus a way to the hearts of the men and women about him. It will do so with increasing power as the world learns to know him better. "Christianity, with its divine morality but without the central figure of Christ, the Son of Man, would become cold, and it is fatal to religion to lose its warmth. The Son of Man was the most tremendous title possible. The forms of Christianity will alter, but the spirit of Christ will grow from more to more in the roll of the ages."¹

IV. The special theme of our Lord's preaching was another and most powerful element in its general acceptance. He threw divine light upon the kingdom of God.² He took a familiar phrase and transformed it. Of this he spoke in the discourse in the synagogue of Nazareth and of this he continued to speak to the last ; and yet on the very eve of his ascension the disciples clung to the narrow and national interpretation of the phrase and had no conception of its world-wide significance. This kingdom on his lips was moral and spiritual, and citizenship in it could be obtained only by those who were morally and spiritually renewed. It belongs to him who has learned to unite together in the full submission of his soul the two clauses in the Lord's Prayer, "Thy kingdom come ; thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." Not primarily an external organization ; it is not meat and drink, but righteousness. As often as on the lips of the old Hebrew prophet that word "righteousness" was on the lips of Jesus. But how much more than it had ever meant before it was to mean henceforth even now we are only faintly apprehending.

¹ Tennyson.

² Wendt, p. 173, 364.

To explain this kingdom of God was the main purpose of our Lord's discourse. His illustrations are as wide as nature and as human life, but they all bear on God and our relations to him. This combination reminds us of the two-fold plan of the apostle, who determined not to know anything save Jesus Christ and him crucified, yet was made all things to all men. Within the ample circle of this kingdom were gathered all the truths which Jesus enforced; and a careful analysis of his words will reveal a theology incomparable for its scope as well as for its importance. The existence and the nature of God; the inflexible law of righteousness; the sin and corruption of man; the promise of a Saviour and his appearance; the coming of the Holy Spirit; the necessity and nature of repentance; regeneration, faith, and holiness of heart and life; the judgment and the future state; the new dispensation, its membership, its worship, its ministry, its simple ordinances; the universal brotherhood of man, and the world-wide blessings of the gospel, these were the truths which Jesus preached.

V. The high level on which his teaching moved was not less remarkable than the wide range which it covered. His eloquence draws its strength from the ascendancy of his moral nature. "It is his life transferred into his teaching." So he appeals to his hearers, as one would who could throw down the challenge fearlessly. "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" He grounded his teaching not on precepts, but on principles. He went direct to the man. "I call thee, human soul," we seem to hear him say, "not such as thou art when thou hast been molded in schools and polished in libraries.

I seek thee simple and rude, untaught and ignorant, as thou art found in those who have added nothing to nature."¹ He appealed to conscience. Let him who was without sin cast the first stone at the transgressor. Compromise and expediency had no place in his vocabulary. The rich young ruler must sell all if he would inherit eternal life. Repentance with him means the new mind, a change of front so entire that all things should be looked at in a new way. This change is divinely wrought by the Holy Spirit whom our heavenly Father will readily give to those who ask him.

This wide range and lofty level of teaching involved a constant reference to himself, yet we are not at any time conscious that he is speaking about himself. He is never self-obtrusive, as many popular preachers have grown to be. And although in his teaching it was necessary that he should deal with subjects of extreme delicacy, not one word did he utter at which modesty could be offended.

VI. Our study of Jesus as a preacher will not be complete unless we notice the progressive consistency of his teaching. There was no change in the substance of his preaching, such as would have obliged him to retract anything which he had previously said. Often he seems to have given his profoundest truths to the most unpromising hearers. To Nicodemus, the learned ruler of the Jews, he spoke of the new birth, the simplest of themes as we might judge; but to the woman of Samaria, of the spiritual character of true worship, a doctrine which to this hour we only inadequately grasp. "No other master ever made himself so accessible to

¹ Tertullian.

the multitude, to the humblest and most ignorant no less than to the greatest minds.”¹ As we read the discourses thus delivered, not in one place or to one people, but in all parts of the land and to audiences of varying intelligence, we are conscious that in his teaching there was substantial advance without any substantial change. The end was in his mind from the beginning. He saw the cross when he talked with Nicodemus as clearly as when toward the close he steadfastly set his face to go up to Jerusalem. There were, apparently, three periods in his preaching. The first is represented by the Sermon on the Mount, and here we note simple thoughts, and abundant illustrations from nature. The second period is marked by a deeper flow of truth, by predictions of coming dawn, and by profounder teaching as to such matters as prayer, life, and relative duties. The third period is that which brings us closest to his heart, and now we listen to his final discourses with his disciples. It was the period of great doctrinal teaching. This careful plan in accordance with which Jesus unfolded his message to the world, gives us our model for ethical sermons; for those which deal with religious duties; and for those which lead us into the holiest of all, and dwell on the life which is hid with Christ in God.

The record of what Jesus began to do and to teach which we have in the four Gospels is necessarily imperfect. The childlike spirit of John supposes that if they should be written every one “even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written.”² But enough remains for us to understand why the multitude was astonished at his teaching. This was the

¹ Pressensé, Book II., Chap. 5.

² John 21:25.

first effect of his preaching: surprise at the matter and at the manner of his discourse. To this succeeded interest. Crowds flocked to hear him. When he spoke every eye was fastened on him. "He taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all." Then came, as it so often comes now, opposition. The enraptured congregation at Nazareth became enraged. Astonishment and interest gave place to open and clamorous rejection. But this was not the final result. In a vast number of cases there was, without doubt, surrender and submission. It has been too much the fashion to speak of the preaching of Jesus as almost fruitless. The eleven apostles, the seventy evangelists, the more than five hundred brethren at once to whom he showed himself alive after his resurrection, the three thousand added to the band of believers at Pentecost, have to be taken into our calculation before we come to any conclusion in this matter.

For ourselves the value in the preaching of Jesus lies in the fact that it gives us our model as well as furnishes us with our inspiration, when we take our place in the unbroken succession of ministers of the word. "Two inestimable blessings," wrote Emerson, "has Christianity given us, first, the Sabbath, and secondly, the institution of preaching."

III

APOSTOLIC PREACHING

THE history of apostolic preaching falls into two parts, in the first of which we study the men who were the companions of our Lord in his earthly ministry; in the second, Paul, who in his great humility counted himself not worthy to be an apostle and yet gloried in that he had been called of God to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

I. The Preaching of the Twelve.

I. Let us glance at our Lord's choice of these men. (1) He evidently made it under a deep sense of its importance. It was a very solemn act, "And it came to pass in these days that Jesus went out into the mountain to pray; and he continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called his disciples: and he chose from them twelve, whom also he named apostles."¹ (2) It was also deliberate. At first sight as we look at the men whom he selected we might be inclined to think otherwise. We are impressed with the points which they had in common. All of one class in the community; all chosen about the same time; nearly all of them from one neighborhood; five, indeed, from one little town; and all, with the possible exception of Judas Iscariot, Galileans. The evangelists, however, leave us in no doubt as to the care which Jesus took in making his selection. "And he goeth

¹ Luke 6: 12, 13.

up into the mountain and calleth unto him whom he himself would ; and they went unto him. And he appointed twelve.”¹ “Ye did not choose me,” Jesus himself said to them on the night of his betrayal, “but I chose you, and appointed you.”²

(3) That it was a selection from a selection suggests that the choice was final. Out of the band of the disciples these twelve men were taken. This also teaches us that the Christian ministry is itself only a higher form of ordinary discipleship. “It is,” says Dr. P. Fairbairn, “a fundamental principle in Christianity that there is nothing absolutely peculiar to any one who has a place in the true church. . . . Whatever may distinguish any one in particular, either as regards the call to work or the capacity to work in the Lord’s service, it must in kind belong to the whole community of the faithful or else form but a subordinate characteristic.”³ In the appointment of these twelve men we have no new hierarchy. The very number—twelve—was national rather than ecclesiastical. They were not men away from the people, but emphatically of the people.

2. This leads us to consider why the apostles were chosen. They were chosen “that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have authority to cast out demons.”⁴ First of all they were to be with him. By him they were to be prepared for this ministry. To them he was at the same time teacher and model. They were no strangers to his hours of preparatory prayer ; when he preached they listened to his words ; when the crowd had dispersed

¹ Mark 3 : 13, 14.

² John 15 : 16.

³ “Pastoral Theology,” pp. 62, 63.

⁴ Mark 3 : 13-15.

they asked him questions suggested by his discourse. When, by and by, Peter declared to Cornelius and his friends, "That saying ye yourselves know, which was published throughout Judea, beginning from Galilee,"¹ it was to the preaching of Jesus that he was in the first instance referring. The drill and discipline which these men received should silence the advocates of an untrained ministry. The first preachers were unlearned and ignorant men only in the estimation of the pedants of the Jewish hierarchy, who counted no man learned who was not trained in their school and no man worthy of notice who was not enrolled among their followers. The Twelve had a Divine Teacher, and they received from him a course in practical theology of incomparable efficiency. The day has not yet dawned in which it is no longer necessary to insist that the choice and culture of the apostles affords no encouragement whatever to the men of whom Robert South in his time said, "Many rushed into the ministry as being the only calling they could profess without serving an apprenticeship. Since it is made a labor of the mind, as to inform men's judgments and move their affections, to resolve difficult places of Scripture, to decide and clear off controversies, I cannot see how to be a butcher, scavenger, or any such trade, does at all qualify and prepare men for this work. We have had almost all sermons full of gibes and scoffs at human learning. Hereupon the ignorant have taken heart and venture upon this great calling." As no others since their time the apostles were equipped for this work. To them for over two years it was granted

¹ Acts 10 : 37.

To watch
The Master work, and catch
Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's true play.

The details of the purpose which Jesus had in selecting these twelve men to be with him are indicated in the concluding words of the passage in Mark, "to preach, to cast out demons."¹ The essentials to a successful ministry are here. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. It is profitable for all things, for the life that now is as well as for the life that is to come. To preach, to heal, to cleanse, this is the preacher's mission to-day as it was when Jesus sent forth his first messengers.

3. The men who were selected to be the first Christian preachers form an interesting study. (1) As we have seen, they were taken from the country rather than from the city. Not one of them came from Jerusalem. They were provincials, but they were drawn from an active, wide-awake part of the land. In those days the Sea of Galilee was fringed with towns and villages abounding in life. It is likely that much of the religious earnestness and intelligence of the land centered there. In his choice Jesus went back of the city and recruited his forces from the country, by which still the life of the city is fed and whence it derives its muscle and brain. (2) He also set the seal of his approval upon the old Hebrew respect for labor. These men had each his trade. They were independent, self-possessed, intelligent. At any moment they could ply the oar or wield the hammer or throw the shuttle for a livelihood. In this honor paid to work lay the contrast between Christianity and heathenism.

¹ Mark 3:14, 15.

"The greatest sages of antiquity, Plato and Aristotle, declare labor degrading to a freeman. The Lord was himself a carpenter, the apostles laborers. The Fathers often emphasized the fact that manual laborers had a better knowledge of God than heathen philosophers."¹ In the choice of his apostles, when set in the light of subsequent experience, we learn that no mistake was made. Few of the great religious movements have come down from the upper to the lower strata of society. Had those men been taken from the hierarchy or the aristocracy of the land, it is as improbable that they would have been heard of beyond their own narrow circle as that Jesus would have become the Saviour of the world had he been born, not in the manger of Bethlehem, but in Herod's palace. While it was true that in his selection of these twelve men our Lord gave grace to the humble, it was equally true that he showed his approval of the diligent. What little we know of them leads us to conclude that they were far from indigent. The mother of James and John ministered to Jesus of her substance.² Peter and Andrew owned a house at Capernaum.³ Matthew spread a feast in honor of Jesus to which many were bidden.⁴ These men were not forerunners of the begging friars or of a mendicant ministry.

(3) What were the peculiar features of the apostles? In common they impress us with a certain honest simplicity. They are prejudiced, to be sure, but they are not hide-bound in tradition. They were, with one exception indeed, the right material out of which to build

¹ Uhhorn, "Conflict of Christianity and Heathenism," p. 188.

² Luke 8:3. ³ Mark 1:29. ⁴ Matt. 9:10.

missionaries who were to go out into all the world and preach. "God's word never contradicts his deeds, and if you mark the ministers who were divinely called through the ages when God was giving the world his Bible, you see that they were all true men. 'Look at the poor fishermen of Galilee,' I hear some one say. Do, and what do you see? Twelve invalids; twelve exquisites; twelve drones; twelve tailors' blocks; twelve mere readers, weak, white, and under-vitalized through indoor life and midnight meditation; twelve ascetics, who had fasted until they were skeletons that the sun shone and the wind blew through? Not you! These ministers were all naturally thorough men. They could run and swim and fling heavy ballast, 'knew the wild joy of living, and leaping from rock to rock,' bear rough wind and weather and look life in the face. Though they were plain men, they were true; they had robust intellects; they had fresh power; they had weight; they could ring out clear and manly language."¹

While they had so much in common, the apostles were evidently strong in their individuality. No two were alike. So a modern preacher² says, "We may take these twelve men as including and representing the leading types of human character, as indicating that in the service of Christ there is a place and a work for every man, whatever his bent, whatever his gift." The born leaders, men of large natures, were Peter and Andrew, James and John.³ The reflective and questioning characters may have included Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas. James, the brother of our Lord,

¹ Stanford, "Homilies," p. 179.

² T. T. Lynch.

³ See A. B. Bruce, "Training of the Twelve," p. 36, *et seq.*

Jude, and Simon, all named after patriarchs, and Judas Iscariot, pursekeeper and traitor of the company, form the Hebraistic and practical.

4. As to the actual preaching of the apostles we are told comparatively little. During the earthly life of their Master it was scarcely more than an announcement that the kingdom of heaven was indeed come, but after his ascension they preached Jesus and the resurrection, a full and finished salvation, and a blessed hope. We find then, as now, two kinds of preaching. The one was missionary, the other ministerial;¹ the one proclaimed the glad news, the other built men up in the faith; the one is the preaching to which the most frequent reference is made in the Acts of the Apostles, the details of the other we gather from the Epistles. (1) At times, under the influence of an enthusiasm akin to ecstasy,² the first believers, breaking forth in praise, or burdened with groanings that could not be uttered, or using words that could not be understood, would speak with tongues. (2) At other times, filled with the breath of prophecy,³ they would speak as men moved by the Holy Spirit. To prophesy was a gift more to be coveted, Paul tells the Corinthians, than to speak in a tongue.⁴ "He that speaketh in a tongue speaketh not unto men but unto God, for no man understandeth. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men edification and exhortation and consolation." These are the features which should distinguish the sermon always and everywhere. The gift of tongues is transient, but the gift of prophesying, or preaching, is permanent. (3) A

¹ Ker, "History of Preaching," p. 38.

² 1 Cor. 14:27-31.

³ 1 Cor. 14:2.

⁴ 1 Cor. 14:1-3.

third form into which the utterances of the early believers fell was "teaching," and little by little this became a most important feature in the sermon. It allowed of questions from the hearers; it covered such explanations and interpretations as the passage under consideration demanded.¹ It is the germ of the expository element in the sermon of to-day.

5. The apostles' sermons which are reported with any kind of fullness are Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost,² his address in the house of Cornelius at Cæsarea,³ and the counsels of James to his brethren of Jerusalem as to what ordinances should be imposed on the Gentile Christians.⁴

(1) Of these, the sermon of Peter at Pentecost is especially worthy of our consideration. It was preceded by days of united prayer on the part of all the believers. It had in it no miraculous element, nor were its results such as have never been paralleled in the history of preaching since. As he spoke, Peter was sustained and fortified by the presence and sympathy of other brethren, the address was followed by a direct effort at ingathering, and on reading the narrative through we see that the true logical order was observed: conviction, inquiry, faith, repentance, conversion, consecration.

(2) When we attempt to analyze the sermon, we notice that it was influenced by the circumstances under which it was given, in the presence of a large and excited crowd of people, and also, very probably, as it proceeded, by their reception of it, by their gesticulations and glances, if not, indeed, by their audible interruptions. But we can so far trace the sequence of

¹ Ker, p. 39.

² Acts 2.

³ Acts 10.

⁴ Acts 15.

thought as to see that Peter began by a vindication of the apostles' characters from the charge of drunkenness;¹ that he then proceeded to explain what the miraculous gift of tongues was, appealing as he did so to ancient Hebrew prophecy and claiming that this prophecy was that day fulfilled; and that, finally, he defended the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth, including the assertion that the outpouring of the Spirit came, as a result of his exaltation to the Father's right hand; and that he closed with the announcement to all the house of Israel that "God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ."

(3) Remark in this sermon the absence of the subjective element, which beguiles the unwary preacher into an expression of his own opinions and away from the simple proclamation of his message; the honor paid throughout to the work of the divine Spirit; the constant appeal to history and especially to prophecy, as the basis of faith; the copious use of Scripture—twelve out of twenty-three verses are quotations from the Old Testament; the clear ringing declaration of the gospel, of man's personal guilt, and of the salvation wrought for all by the death, resurrection, and ascended glory of Christ. Authoritative in its scriptural basis; personal, addressing itself to the intelligence of his hearers and then making them the witnesses in the case which he was pleading; and urgent, appealing to the consciences of those who listened, until at last, pricked to the heart, they said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" this memorable sermon is marked by just three features which God has

¹ Acts 2:14-36.

never failed to honor, and which should distinguish the preaching of the gospel from our pulpits. The sermon which is authoritative, personal, urgent, is likely to be followed by results akin to those which made this day of Pentecost forever memorable.¹

6. Peter's address at Pentecost inaugurated the preaching of the apostles in the new era which had dawned on the world. In common with the sermon which Jesus preached in Nazareth on the threshold of his public ministry, its text was taken from an old Hebrew prophet. The words of Isaiah read in the synagogue at Nazareth, the words of Joel recalled before the multitude in Jerusalem, were now accomplished. "To-day," said Jesus, "hath this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears." "This is that," said Peter, "which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel." Peter's sermon, fired though it was with the fervor of the new evangel, was thoroughly patriotic. It could have been spoken only to Hebrews, intense in their love for country, in their faith in the future of their race, and in their Messianic hope.

But the gospel was to be preached to the uttermost parts of the earth. For its wider mission another kind of sermon would be needed, and another kind of preacher. The sermon and the preacher were found when Saul of Tarsus became Paul the apostle.

II. The Preaching of Paul. The circumstances of his call were peculiar. They separated him from the other apostles, "the men of transition between the old and the new. These proceeded from the human to the divine. They gazed first on the Christ of the flesh. They fol-

¹ W. Arthur, "The Tongue of Fire."

lowed the steps of the Son of Man from the cradle to the cross ; when the crown came their pilgrimage was over. But Paul began with the crown. His first sight of the Christ was the Christ glorified. He knew the power of his resurrection before he felt the fellowship of his sufferings.”¹

This fact, as it changed all his life, colored all his preaching. It brought him into sympathy with the world to which he was to go, the world of Greece and Rome, with its pathetic intimations of immortality and its expectant face set toward the vision which was not yet in sight.²

There are two reasons why it will repay us to study Paul as a preacher :

1. Because the materials at our command are abundant. These may be readily classified :

(1) His sermons, reported only in brief outlines and no one of them taking more than five minutes to read, can easily be filled out.³ At Antioch in Pisidia, at Lystra, and at Athens he delivered, apparently at length, addresses which are alive to-day with rhetorical vigor. The sermon on Mars’ hill is a noble example of Christian oratory, and, unlike Peter’s address at Pentecost, it bears the evidence of careful preparation. Passing along through the street and squares of the city he had found his text : “The Unknown God.” The orator is before us when we read, “And Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus”; the practised pleader appears in his introductory sentences, in which he conciliates his

¹ George Matheson, in “The Prophets of the Christian Faith,” p. 37.

² Benjamin Ide Wheeler, “Dionysos and Immortality,” p. 53, 54.

³ Acts 13, 14, 17; see also 20 : 17-38.

audience, impresses his personality on his subject, and rouses the curiosity of the Athenians to hear what this new teaching is. The analysis is simple :

PAUL'S SERMON ON MARS' HILL.¹

1. Its purpose : "What therefore ye worship in ignorance," etc. (23).
2. Its plan : (1) God the Creator "dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (24).
 (2) God the Sustainer needs nothing from us (25).
 (3) As our Creator and Sustainer he has a purpose for us (26-28).
 - (a) We are all one in our origin (26).
 - (b) Our life and work are predetermined (26).
 - (c) The end of life is to know him (27).
 - (d) This is possible (26-28).
 (4) This God, our Parent, cannot be represented by idols (29).
 (5) But he can be approached in penitence and faith (30).
 (6) To him we are all accountable ; and the day of judgment will make this plain (31).
 (7) Then Jesus shall judge the world in righteousness as is proved by his resurrection (31).
3. Sequel (32-34).

(2) His speeches² to the elders of Ephesus, before the Jews on the castle stairs in Jerusalem, before the council, before Felix, before Herod Agrippa, and, finally, at Rome, are valuable because, perhaps more perfectly than his sermons, they reveal Paul's skill as a rhetorician.

(3) Even his Epistles, masterly in their reasoning as they are, are evidently the work of a speaker. In form and in spirit they are strongly rhetorical.

¹ Acts 17.

² Chap. 20, 22, 23, 24, 26, 28.

2. For a second reason Paul should be studied as a preacher, and that is because of the prominence which he himself gave to preaching in his ministry.

He was a preacher from the first. No sooner converted to the Christian faith than straightway in the synagogues he proclaimed Jesus "that he is the Son of God."¹ He maintained the habit to the end, for when last we see him he is in Rome, "preaching the kingdom of God."² Not for an hour did he question the divine commission, separated from his birth "to preach the Son of God among Gentiles."³ From his earliest utterances in Damascus his preaching was in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power; nor has he ever ceased to influence the world through his advocacy of the gospel. To-day it is Paul who furnishes texts to the pulpit of Christendom for its weightiest utterances on the Christian religion.

(1) "What were the physical characteristics of Paul the preacher?"⁴ There are many passages in his writings which would lead us to infer that he was not robust; but even if that were the case, such obstacles in Paul, as also in later preachers,—Calvin and Cotton Mather and Robert Hall,—may have helped rather than hindered his preaching. Evidently he was successful as an orator. Before country folk in Pisidia, and philosophers at Athens, and Jews at Jerusalem, and Romans at Cæsarea he commanded, if not the acquiescence, certainly the attention of hearers, now ignorant, now contemptuous, now bigoted, now indifferent.

(2) Passing to his intellectual characteristics, we

¹ Acts 9:20.

² *Ibid.*, 28:31.

³ Gal. 1:13-16.

⁴ 1 Cor. 2:3; 2 Cor. 10:10; Gal. 4:13.

notice *a.* that his was the style of a cultivated man, capable of expressing any thought in fitting words, often showing evidence of careful rhetorical training, and always vivid and vigorous. "His words," as Luther said, "are not dead words; they are living creatures with hands and feet."¹ The sentences are indeed often involved, and seem almost careless in their construction, but the mighty passion of his purpose carries him triumphantly forward, superior to tangled forms of words, and digression, to daring flights of thought and equally daring confusion of imagery, and to frequent and perplexing digressions, as resistlessly as the broad river in flood catches in its current equally the driftwood and the merchantman and bears them onward to the ocean. His eye is never lifted from the end he has in view.² His style was the style of the orator, who has his audience as well as his subject in sight while he speaks. To his restless impulsive nature motion was indispensable. "Action, action, action," alike in thought and in language, kept both thought and language advancing. The peculiar circumstances of his life, a life of constant change, of marvelous adventures, and in which the unexpected was constantly happening, called out the entire man, furnished a rich variety of chords upon which he could play, and made him sympathetic, earnest, and fearless.

b. In the charm of his rhetoric we are in danger of losing sight of Paul's logic. His mind, however, was eminently the mind of a reasoner, his powers of persuasion are frequently dwelt upon by Luke in the book of

¹ Farrar, "Life of Paul," Vol. I.; *Excursus I., II., III.*

² Hoppin, "Homiletics," pp. 36, 37.

Acts, and severe and sustained argument marks the Epistle to the Romans, the First Epistle to the Corinthians, and the Epistle to the Galatians.

c. Alike his rhetorical and his logical resources quickened his imagination. He had a never-failing treasury of illustration, and remarkable aptitude in suiting his figures to his hearers. To the peasant at Lystra he spoke of natural scenery; to the Athenian of poetry and art. Writing to the Ephesians he had in view the great temple which was the glory of their city; in his charming letter to Philemon he played on the name of the runaway slave, that so he might gain for him the forgiveness of his master. *d.* Here, and in a hundred other instances, Paul gave evidence of possessing that knowledge of human nature which is of such vast service to the preacher. We have seen how quickly, at Antioch, at Lystra, at Athens, he adapted himself to his hearers,—“all things to all men that I may by all means save some,”¹—but equally quick was he to seize on points in his favor when he was speaking. The altar to the unknown God was a fit text for a people who would have laughed to scorn words taken from the Hebrew Scriptures;² to cry out, “Brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee,” and so divide the infuriated council into two opposing factions, gave him the opportunity to escape their combined rage;³ to compliment Agrippa on his being an expert in all customs and questions among the Jews, was to avail himself of almost the only favorable point in Agrippa’s character, and prejudice the king in favor alike of the speaker and of his message.⁴ Had he roused the

¹ 1 Cor. 9:22.

² Acts 17:23.

³ Acts 23:6.

⁴ Acts 26:2, 26.

animosity of the king at the outset of his speech, Paul would have had no chance at the end to press upon Agrippa the claims of a Saviour foretold by the prophets.

(3) The moral characteristics of the apostle especially qualified him for his arduous work. His was a high-strung nature, full of trepidation in the anticipation of some new experiences, and nervous before speaking. But he was courageous, and never evinced any fear in the presence of rancorous judges, angry mobs, raving winds, or raging seas. His powers of endurance must have been very great to carry him safely through such dangers and trials as only a missionary—and he but faintly—can now understand. His courage was combined with a pathos and tenderness such as have often been found in brave men. His farewell address to the elders of Ephesus was almost maternal in its solicitude for his children in the faith.¹ In his great sorrow and unceasing pain on behalf of his kinsmen according to the flesh he could wish himself anathema for Christ, if only they might be saved.² Nor did he ever assume that before his own conversion he was not as conscientious as he showed himself in his after-life. His sympathy with his brethren who were still unconvinced, was so strong just because once he also had thought within himself that he ought to do "many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth."³ Courage and tenderness and a conscience void of offense were among the qualities which gave Paul such moral power as a preacher.

(4) To conclude our study, we must glance at the religious characteristics of Paul.

¹ Acts 20.

² Rom. 9:1-3.

³ Acts 26:9.

We recognize at once his familiarity with Scripture; his reverence for God, an inheritance from his Hebrew forefathers, to which had been added, in his case, a deep attachment to the Lord who had appeared to him; and his devotion, which was so strong that at all times and even under the most unpromising circumstances he viewed those whom he met religiously. Forgetful of his bonds he will reason with Felix of righteousness and self-control and the judgment to come;¹ Festus must hear the story of the resurrection which had proclaimed light to the Gentiles;² on the wave-washed deck he must tell the famished mariners and soldiers of the God "whose I am and whom I serve."³

His loyalty to the gospel of Christ was as marked a characteristic in Paul, as were his familiarity with the Scriptures, his reverence, and his devotion. Christ was the heart and core of his preaching, because Christ was the heart and core of his own spiritual life. From the Cross he started, and to the Cross he returned. At the same time his range of subjects was so wide that all subsequent theological discussion has been forced to appeal to him. In the realm of religious thought there is no question of the hour, as there is no question of the ages, upon which Paul has not spoken. Let it be the atonement, the historical Jesus, eschatology, the newest phase of biblical criticism, mention what subject you may, you will find that in the discussion of it Paul cannot be set aside or ignored. It may be added that his conviction as to the relation of the present to the future powerfully influenced the preaching of Paul.⁴ The present, in his thinking, was only

¹ Acts 24.

² *Ibid.*, 26.

³ *Ibid.*, 27:23.

⁴ 2 Cor. 4, 5.

the foreground to the future. This habit of mind was due in part to his Oriental training, which would lead him to agree with the sages of India or China that "as a man journeying to another village may enjoy a night's rest in the open air, but after leaving his resting-place proceeds again on his journey the next day, so father, mother, life, and wealth are all of them only like a night's rest to us—wise people do not cling to them forever."¹ But still more was it due to his Jewish extraction, which had from his cradle trained him to live in the hope of the future; and more than either of these, to his faith as a Christian, which led him to anticipate a speedy and final termination of the present state.²

As we look back on these first days, it is this figure of Paul which stands out most clearly in the annals of preaching. As no other, he combined the emotions of the Hebrew, the endurance of the Roman, and the intellect of the Greek. He was the orator of the transition from the Orient to the Occident. To him it was given to naturalize Christianity in Europe, and start it on its westward march in the van of the course of empire. Born a Jew, he was educated in a city which was practically Greek, and was a citizen of Rome. In Paul a mighty intellect was united with a noble moral nature, and both were consecrated to God and devoted to the spread of the gospel of Christ. He was chosen and trained and equipped to make the gospel which began to be preached in the little country of Palestine the gospel for all the world and for all time.³

¹ Cf. Max Müller, "India, What it can Teach Us," Lecture III.

² Farrar, "Life of Paul," Vol. I., p. 362.

³ See Beecher's "Sermons," Phil. I : 15-18; Broadus' "Sermons and Addresses," p. 139.

IV

THE FIRST FOUR CENTURIES

THREE influences would naturally affect primitive preaching.

I. Of these the first and most influential was the example and teaching of the apostles. According to Clement of Rome it was they who laid down the rule that the teachers of the early church should be chosen in accordance with the judgment of approved men and with the consent of the whole community. In all probability the apostles trained some of these teachers. Clement himself seems to have been taught by Peter; Ignatius by Peter, Paul, and John. "I," Polycarp used to say, "who have seen the apostles"; and it was no doubt to John, the man whose spirit he so richly inherited, that he looked up as his father in Christ.

II. Then the comparatively humble circumstances of the believers at the first, would also determine the character of the preaching.¹ "Like people, like priest." Wool-dressers, shoemakers, men rude and illiterate, possessing the gift of prophecy, but uttering their message in a barbarous *patois*, indifferent to the rules of style or the niceties of speech, such were the zealots who in the common belief "proclaimed the gospel, first of all, among women and children."² The gift of teaching to which Paul had given a place superior to the gift of

¹ Hatch, "Hibbert Lectures," pp. 105, 106.

² Celsus, see Lightfoot's "Historical Essays," I., II.

tongues came to its own very slowly. Was it not to Paul that the advocates of impromptu address could also appeal for support? Had he not claimed that he himself, ignoring persuasive words of human wisdom, had preached to the fastidious Greeks only in the demonstration of the Spirit? For over two hundred years there were Christian assemblies which declined to have for their teachers men well-born and educated. A tradesman, a clothier, a charcoal burner, whose blackened face moved the young to laughter, these were the men of their choice.¹

III. Nor could a popular power, such as from the first preaching was, fail to be affected by the age to which it appealed. At once it came into conflict with heathenism and philosophy. To the fellowship of believers turned "many a soul from among the heathen thirsting for truth, many a seeker after wisdom in the schools of the philosophers," to drink eagerly of the fountain of living waters welling up in the barren wilderness.² It is indeed pathetic to mark the failure of ancient Rome to grasp the significance of Christianity—philosophers and historians professedly conscious of the disintegrating forces around them, and yet all the while despising "the most powerful moral lever that has ever been applied to the affairs of men."³ But this was not to last. Alike heathenism and philosophy before long came to be affected by Christianity. Rome was forced to recognize a power with which she could not successfully cope; and to acknowledge the truth of Chrysostom's eloquent contrast between the fall of Jerusalem

¹ Hoppin, p. 50.

² Uhlhorn, "Conflict," etc., p. 153.

³ Lecky, qu. Lightfoot, "Historical Essays," pp. 10, 11.

and the spread of Christianity : "Oh, strange and wonderful fact ! countless myriads of Jews did the Romans then subdue ; but they did not prevail over twelve men fighting against them, naked and unarmed." Then heathenism in some measure, and philosophy to a much larger extent, began in their turn to influence Christian thought, and to color Christian preaching.

1. In the character of this preaching we mark in the first three centuries a distinct progress. The artless story of the gospel, as Peter preached it on the day of Pentecost and as Paul summarized it in writing to the Corinthians, developed into a more systematic form of address. 2. Spiritual things were compared with spiritual. Teaching, which was at the beginning chiefly expository, took on logical form, and the sequence of thought was more clearly marked. 3. The homily, at first merely an informal address, developed into the sermon as we have it now. With the addition to the number of believers of many who had been trained in the porches of the philosopher, or who had been influenced by the thought of the hoary East, the basis of authority was itself shifted. Human opinion was appealed to now, where formerly the word of God sufficed. To these intellectual influences must be added the effect of rhetorical culture. The Greek had a passion for speaking. Not at Athens alone but everywhere his eager mind and fluent tongue led him "to tell or to hear some new thing."¹ Rhetoric was a popular branch of polite education. Many of the Christians previous to their conversion had studied in its schools. And before the third century closed much of the simple

¹ Hatch, p. 113.

charm of the gospel message, as it had been first of all delivered, was gone. "Christianity," says Doctor Hatch, "came into the educated world in the simple dress of a prophet of righteousness. It won that world by the stern reality of its life, by the subtle bonds of its brotherhood, by its divine message of consolation and hope. Around it thronged the race of eloquent talkers who persuaded it to change its dress and to assimilate its language to their own. It seemed thereby to win a speedier and completer victory. But it purchased conquest at the price of reality. With that its progress stopped."

I. Clement of Rome (*first century*). Mention has already been made of Clement of Rome. To him we turn as the first preacher of whom we have any distinct conception after the days of the apostles. Sermons of this period we have none. But the extant "Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians" is in fact a homily and may suggest what early preaching was like. In it we find an abundant use of Scripture and a conspicuous loyalty to the teaching and spirit of the apostles themselves. But it is ethical rather than doctrinal, and when compared with the writings of the New Testament it seems meagre and commonplace. There is an echo of Paul when the writer says, "Who can declare the bounds of the love of God? Who is sufficient to tell the majesty of its beauty? The height whereunto love exalteth is unspeakable. Love joineth us unto God; love covereth a multitude of sins; love endureth all things, is long-suffering in all things."¹ But it is an echo only.

To a later period, probably between A. D. 130 and 100,

¹ Lightfoot, "St. Clement of Rome."

belongs what has been called the Second Epistle of Clement, a spurious but very early work, which is worthy to be studied as the first example of a Christian homily. There is no announcement of a text, the style is abrupt, quotations from Scripture mingle with allusions to the games of the arena, the thought is discursive and the treatment, while at times very vigorous, especially when the author pleads for the divinity of Christ, is lacking in point.

II. Justin Martyr (120-190). We stand on firmer ground when we come to Justin Martyr, in whom we first find distinct traces of the influence of philosophy on preaching. This was not to be wondered at, for previous to his conversion Justin Martyr had been a rhetorician, a philosopher, and a lecturer. All that he had and was he carried over to the service of Christ. To him we owe the earliest description of Christian worship. We see the believers gathering in the early morning in their modest sanctuary, then we listen as together they intone a psalm, and then as the elder reads aloud the portion of the holy Scripture on which the discourse is founded. After this the people rise to their feet and join in the great prayer which carries up to heaven in a vast petition "all the adorations, all the humiliations, all the supplications of the individuals, as a river rolls all the watercourses of the valley in its immense current." At the close of the prayer those who are only hearers, the catechumens preparing for fellowship, and the penitents under discipline retire, and the Lord's Supper is observed. After that the people return and the Bible is again read, not in disconnected passages, but book by book, from beginning

to end. To this method it is that we owe the homilies of the primitive church, a library of expository discourses upon the Prophets, the Gospels, and the Epistles, "which remain as precious monuments of the early preaching and presumptive proof of the importance which the book of God occupies therein."¹

III. Clement of Alexandria (*c. 150-220*). The rapid spread of the faith is suggested by Clement of Alexandria, who filled for many years the office of principal of the famous theological school of Alexandria, the center of Greek culture, from which a stream of missionaries poured forth carrying the gospel east and west through the most renowned cities of the ancient world in Europe, Asia, and along the northern coast of Africa. Born in the midst of paganism and early a seeker after truth, he believed that as the law had been a schoolmaster to bring the Jew to Christ, so philosophy had been to the Greek. His heart went out to the cultured class, among whom he had been brought up. He aimed to reach and save these. His teaching about God and man was affected by the philosophy of his youthful days, while yet to know Christ in the high spiritual sense of the term was his aspiration. For rhetoric as such he cared little. With him the literary is subordinate to the philosophic and both are subservient to the spiritual. In him, first of the preachers of those early years, we find the powerful influence of the fascinating but perilous use of allegory. To spiritualize every event in Scripture was natural to one who had been accustomed by his Greek training to see "in the hills and woods and streams shadows and suggestions of the divine."

¹ G. T. Purves, "Testimony of Justin Martyr to Early Christianity."

The miracle of our Lord feeding the five thousand was a fact indeed, but it was to him a parable as well. The barley loaves signified the preparation of the Jew and the Greek for the pure wheat of the gospel,—did not barley appear earlier in the sermon than wheat?—and the fishes symbolized the Greek philosophy, “generated and carried along amid the Gentile billows.” At other times this fertile fancy was used to better effect: “Though the artisan can make an idol, he has never made a breathing image or formed soft flesh out of earth. Who liquefied the marrow? Who hardened the bones? Who extended the nerves? Who inflated the veins? Who infused the blood into them? Who stretched the skin around them? Who made the eye to see? Who breathed the soul into the body? Who freely gave righteousness? Who has promised immortality? The Creator of all things alone, the supreme Artisan, made man a living image; but your Olympian Jove, the image of an image far differing from the truth, is the dumb work of Attic hands.”

IV. *Origen (180-253).* A greater man in intellectual force than *Clement of Alexandria* was his disciple, *Origen*, although it was he who was destined to carry to still greater lengths the passion of allegory. He was born at *Alexandria* in the days of the persecution. His father was a Christian, seized, imprisoned, and martyred when the boy was but fifteen years old. Already young *Origen* had shown such signs of grace and wisdom that when he slept his father would sometimes reverently kiss the breast of his son as a temple of the Holy Ghost, and when his father lay in prison the boy not only went to him urging him to be faithful to the end,

but so earnestly coveted to share his cross with him that his mother had to hide his clothes to prevent his seeking martyrdom as well. Through a youth of poverty and hardship, while supporting his mother and brothers and sisters, Origen pursued his studies until he also was called to be head of the catechetical school at Alexandria over which Clement, his master, had presided. He was often misunderstood by his brethren, maligned and persecuted; but nothing could damp his passion for truth. From youth to age he preached daily, and, winning to himself the proud title of "the Adamantine," proved himself worthy of it by surrendering his whole life to the quest of spiritual verities. Attacked and excommunicated by those who should have been his truest friends, tortured at last during the Decian persecution, Origen held on his resolute way, dying at Tyre, a wornout man with a spirit dauntless to the last.

At his father's knees when he was yet a child Origen learned to memorize portions of the Bible, and as he did so, questions such as perplexed older and wiser minds than his rose to his lips. The Bible became from that time central in his thinking. "Unsurpassed in Christian zeal, unrivaled in universal learning, he devoted a long life to the study of the Scriptures. He believed that the Bible contained all the treasures of wisdom, and so he often appears to see mysteries in it which the critic refuses to recognize. He believed that Christianity contained the answer to every human instinct, and so often presses with unchastened boldness to offer an explanation in its name for that which must as yet be hidden from men."¹ To explain the Bible

¹ Westcott.

was to use exegesis. So the classes of men and women gathered about him resolved themselves into congregations, and his running comment grew into lectures, and he became the founder of what we call expository preaching. True, he builded better than he knew, but to him belongs the distinction of laying the foundations. His fervid fancy joined itself to his varied learning, and grammar was frequently forced to yield unnatural meanings. The explanation which was the most eccentric and far-fetched was often the most admired, and so the mischievous use of allegory looks to him as its first great patron. "St. Jerome and Origen," exclaims Luther, "God forgive them! were the means that allegories were held in such esteem." We have seen how Clement, his master, let his fancy play with the miracles of our Lord. The Old Testament, however, was Origen's favorite field for this perilous pastime. "In a sermon on the history of Lot fleeing from Sodom he interprets the narrative as signifying the escape of the soul out of its natural and unregenerate state to the appointed salvation. Lot's wife is the soul looking back; the pillar of salt is the bitter unsatisfactoriness of worldly pleasures and pursuits."¹ To Clement allegorizing was early familiar because the philosophers used it in pressing heathen mythology into their service. But Origen was born in a Christian family, and his enthusiasm for the dangerous practice shows how strongly the world about both of them was influencing the habits of current thought and religion.

V. *Tertullian (170-240).* How strong that influence was in the case of a man born in heathenism,

¹ Hoppin, p. 75.

bred a rhetorician, and who did not become a Christian until he reached mature years, we see when we turn to Tertullian. He never emancipated himself from these early teachings. A turbulent spirit, he dwelt in turbulent times. The old shadow of heathenism haunted him. In his preaching we find a mingling of the pagan and the Christian. But in his practice, and especially when brought face to face with danger, Tertullian was true as steel. When the decree of the Roman governor went forth that Christians should be burnt, it was he who could say, "We do not fear or dread you in the least. We worship one God; you worship demons. Numerous as we are, almost the larger half of the citizens, we obey all lawful authority and sacrifice for the emperor, but with prayers and not blood-offerings in which demons revel. I warn you not to fight against God."¹

In his famous "Apology," Tertullian has given us a valuable summary of what this early preaching was: "We continually preach," he says, "and press the duties of the gospel with our utmost power and argument, we exhort, we reprove, we pass the divine censure of excommunication with solemnity."

VI. Cyprian (200-258). The most eloquent of these early preachers was probably Cyprian who, as well as Tertullian, was a native of the rich and luxurious city of Carthage. His father was a senator, a man of wealth and influence, holding important offices in the empire, and his son, destined to follow in his steps, was preparing for office also when he was converted and devoted his splendid powers to the cause of Christ.

¹ L. S. Sears, "The History of Oratory," p. 164.

Heathen as well as Christians were held spell-bound under his eloquence, and although he was not free—as who was in those times?—from the prevailing fashion for allegorizing, Cyprian used his rare powers well; especially he insisted that the exposition of Scripture and the enforcement of its truths should not be suffered to fall into disuse.¹

When the fourth century opened, the progress of Christianity had more than marched with the progress of the empire. It must have been hard to believe that in a little over three hundred years the religion of Jesus of Nazareth had not only so completely transformed the world but that it had also itself been so completely transformed. The upper classes had gradually become Christian. Constantine, not content with merely tolerating the Faith, acknowledged it as the religion of the empire. Its priests began to interfere in secular affairs, and in critical moments to exalt the Church above the State. Meanwhile, the whole continent of Europe from the Hellespont to the German Ocean was in a state of ferment and change. At the same time theological questions of the first moment were made the subjects of general and often fierce discussions, and Arian and Orthodox threatened to rend Christendom in twain.

Preaching, which has always been a mirror of the age, was now also a molding power in its thought and action. Public worship still retained its early features, psalmody, prayer, exhortation, but with more form and added stateliness, and in striking contrast with the days of the Upper Chamber and the Catacombs. The number of festivals was multiplied; services became more

¹ Hoppin, p. 63.

frequent and more ornate. And fast and festival alike called for the preacher, and gave him an opportunity to display his powers. Time had been when the layman was welcome as a preacher. As we have seen, the artisan would then throw aside his apron and his hammer, and take his place as an exhorter in the simple service of the fellowship. Now the layman was not suffered to preach in the church itself, and nowhere else unless the bishop were present. Not content with this rigorous limitation, the bishop in many instances aspired to keep all the preaching to himself. The church edifices vied in splendor with the palaces of the rulers, the public buildings of the State, and the theatres to which the multitude flocked for amusement. Marked by such features, the fourth century stands between the simplicity of an earlier day and the dark ages in which the malign forces now getting strength would for many a long year to come hold Christendom at their mercy. The century itself, however, was one which is to this hour without a peer in the history of the pulpit.

VII. Athanasius (297-373). Foremost as a champion of the deity of the Son of God incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth stood Athanasius. When only sixteen years old he attracted the attention of the Bishop of Alexandria, who made him his secretary. He grew up in the stirring city where heathenism was seen in the its most gorgeous trappings, dead indeed, but arrayed in jeweled robes of rare magnificence; and where philosophy, stimulated by the new faith, was grappling in her lecture rooms with questions of the profoundest moment. The Arian heresy, still championed by the gaunt ascetic Arius in person, was taking form, and

gaining a multitude of adherents. Against heathenism, philosophy, and heresy Athanasius entered the lists to do battle. His heaviest blows were aimed at Arianism. Alexandria rang with the combat. It was the talk of the market-place. Clothes venders, money lenders, runaway slaves still smarting from the lash, discussed the mysteries which long after found expression in the Athanasian Creed. "Athanasius against the world," was the cry of the great controversialist, as he stood forth to champion the faith he held dearer than life. It is with his preaching that we are concerned, but inevitably that was influenced by the disputations in which he was constantly engaged. For over half a century, in the cathedral at Alexandria, in the hermit's cave, in distant countries through which he traveled, Athanasius was the recognized exponent of Christian doctrine. In him singleness of purpose, and concentration of aim, were combined with remarkable flexibility, readiness, and variety of resource. He caught from Origen the enthusiasm for expository preaching, although his sharp logical mind saved him from the allegorizing habit of that great preacher. "Apt to teach," is the eulogy which Erasmus passes upon him. "Through the long tragedy," said Hooker, "there was nothing observed other than such as it became a wise man to do, or a righteous to suffer." Gibbon admires in him a style clear, forcible, and persuasive.¹ His reputation as a preacher would no doubt have been greater had his fame as a controversialist been less; and we must be content, mindful of the immense service which he rendered to the Christian faith,

¹ "Decline and Fall," etc., Vol. III., p. 217.

to own with the historian Gibbon that "the immortal name of Athanasius will never be separated from the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity to whose defense he consecrated every moment and faculty of his being."

VIII. Basil (330-379). To the same controversy Basil, a greater preacher than Athanasius, also devoted his life, battling Arianism, throughout Asia Minor and the adjoining provinces. Born in Cappadocia, he was carefully trained in rhetoric, and completed his education at Athens. In his estimation preaching was an art. He knew how best to define a doctrine, to use illustrations, to round a period. His preaching was often practical. He excelled in dealing with the sins of daily life; to him belonged the rare distinction of charming the rich while at the same time he gained the ear of the poor. Reading his sermons to-day you are impressed with the intelligence of his audience. He addressed an age familiar with the controversies of the hour and the current vocabulary alike of the philosopher and the ecclesiastic, and his hearers following his discourses, ranked him with Plato and Demosthenes. One can scarcely understand how otherwise he should begin an address to an audience of artisans with such words as these: "It is becoming that any one who is going to tell the story of the formation of the world should begin with a portrayal of the cosmic beauty which prevails in visible things." But indeed through the most florid of his sentences a vein of argument runs: "What reward shall we give unto the Lord, for all the benefits he hath bestowed? From the cheerless gloom of non-existence he waked us into being; he ennobled us with understanding; he taught us arts to promote means of

life ; he commanded the prolific earth to yield its nurture ; he bade the animals to own us as their lords. For us the rains descend ; for us the sun sheddeth abroad its creative beams ; the mountains rise, the valleys bloom, affording us grateful habitation and a sheltering retreat. For us the rivers flow ; for us the fountains murmur ; the sea opens its bosom to admit our commerce ; the earth exhausts its stores ; each new object presents a new enjoyment ; all nature pouring her treasures at our feet, through the bounteous grace of him who wills that all be ours.”¹

IX. Gregory Nazianzen (330-390). Gregory Nazianzen, who takes his distinctive name from Nazianzus in Cappadocia, was no less prominent than his friend Basil as a disputant in the Arian controversy. He studied rhetoric in the same school as Basil, and never shook off the elaborate and artificial system of the Sophists in which he was trained. But he was naturally a poet as well as a rhetorician, and in his preaching, while often practical and always insisting that the essence of Christianity must be found not in speculation but in life, he used a style of extreme brilliance. His sermons, attracting men of all classes and opinions, often winning loud applause and tempting the more thoughtful among his hearers to take furtive notes, were heard from various motives, and produced various effects. He himself pictures the excited hearer breaking out into audible tokens of approval, the antagonist provoked to contradiction, the earnest seeker after truth absorbed in silent meditation. His confidence that his preaching was not in vain expressed itself in the Valedictory Oration with which

¹ Moule, “Christian Oratory,” pp. 118, 119.

he bade farewell to his congregation when malice, jealousy, and doctrinal bitterness drove him into resigning his bishopric. "Lift up thine eyes and look around, thou who wouldst test my teaching here. Observe this glorious wreath that has already been woven; see the assembly of presbyters venerable for their age and intelligence, the modest deacons, the excellent readers, the inquiring, docile people, the men and women alike respected for their virtues. This goodly wreath (I say it not from the Lord, but still I say it), this wreath have I in a great measure helped to construct: this crown is, at least in part, the result of my preaching."¹

X. Ambrose (340-397). There is no more romantic incident in early church history than that which introduces Ambrose, at first a lawyer, and a prominent figure in the court of the Praetorian prefect of Italy, then appointed governor of the provinces of Liguria and Æmilia with Milan as his capital. Auxentius, Bishop of Milan, and an Arian, died in 374. At once a violent contest arose as to his successor. The strife became so fierce that at last it culminated in a riot in the open streets. The governor was summoned to quell the outbreak of popular passion. Rising in the crowded square he held in check the surging crowd, addressing them as though he himself had inherited from Christ the blessing of the peacemaker. When he ceased, a child cried out "Ambrose for bishop." The cry was taken up, until it became universal, and then and there, by general acclaim, he was chosen to the sacred office, much against his will. He was baptized, ordained, consecrated, and became famous as the Western champion of the truth for which

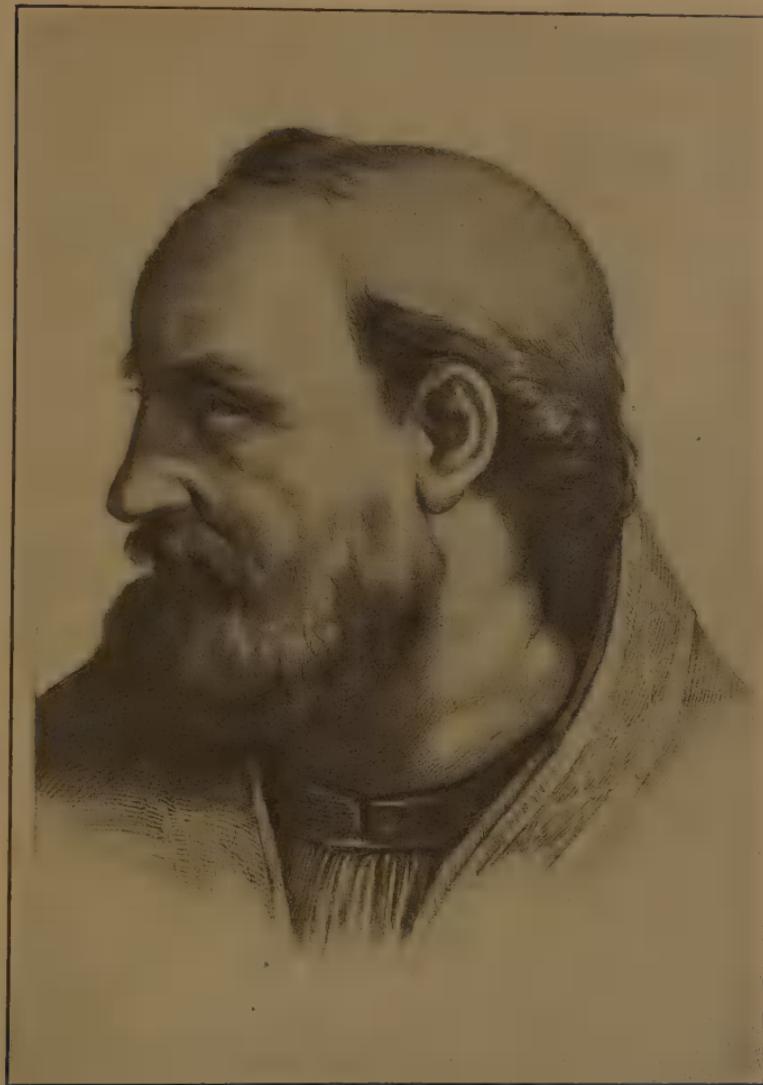
¹ Carl Ullmann, "Gregory of Nazianzus."

Athanasius did battle in the East. Although his model was the Greek rhetorician, he is in some respects the greatest of Latin Christian orators. The persuasive skill which quieted the mob at Milan remained by him. The force of arms was impotent against it. "Ambrose came into my camp," said an invading general, "spoke words, and I gave up my brutal purposes; I know not why."¹ But his greatest victory, the triumph by which he made himself immortal in his influence, was won when the brightest genius of his time came to listen to him, careless and yet concerned; dissipated and yet secretly longing for purity; unbelieving and yet unable to break away from a mother's prayers; young and yet already weary of the battle with the divine Spirit struggling within him—Augustine.

XI. Augustine (354-430). Attracted to Milan by a desire "simply to measure the power and discover the secret of the famous eloquence, Augustine was led, insensibly to himself, to accept spiritually what he had listened to with rhetorical admiration, and to own for himself the Divine Master to whom Ambrose incessantly pointed and urged him."² Now chiefly remembered as a great theologian, Augustine of Hippo, was during his life a powerful and popular preacher. He has left three hundred and ninety-four sermons, brief and pregnant, clear in thought as well as in style, often masterly in their expository skill, and sometimes reminding us that we are listening to the man who in his youth won for himself distinction as an orator.³ He understood how to rank wisdom before rhetoric, and truth before its ex-

¹ Sears, "Oratory," p. 167. ² Storrs, "Bernard of Clairvaux," p. 358.

³ See his "Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount."



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pression. "Mere oratory," he says, "is one of the many objects *quæ amantur et transeunt.*" But to the impatient and fiery Africans whom he addressed he knew that it was welcome, and in his own heart it also struck a responsive chord. To a passionate temperament Augustine joined a logical mind, and in all he had and was, all he could be or do, he belonged to his Master. "Thou movest us to delight in praising thee; for thou hast formed us for thyself, and our heart is restless till it rest in thee." Now by their shoutings, now by their tears he measured the effect of his words on his audience, and no man better understood Luther's rule, to know when to stop. To this hour his writings affect the preachers of Christendom more than many of them appreciate. "The quarry from which nearly every preacher of note has dug," Spurgeon calls him, and the Spanish proverb quaintly preserves his influence in the Catholic pulpit when it says, "A sermon without Augustine is as a stew without bacon." The love of Monica for her wayward son, and how it was crowned at last when hand in hand they sat and recounted the steps by which the prodigal son had been brought home to his Father, is famous in story, song, and picture.

XII. Chrysostom (347-407). Not less powerful was a mother's influence over another son, afterward to be the most famous preacher of his time, and indeed in some respects of all time, "John of the Golden Mouth," Chrysostom. Under the celebrated Libanius the young man studied rhetoric, and the old teacher on his deathbed complained that this favorite disciple would have been his worthiest successor if the Christians had not carried him off. It was his mother

who rescued him from the life of the Sophist, and "stole him to a life of piety."¹ From the career of a teacher of rhetoric, a lawyer, a man of the world, he became a close Bible student, a great popular reformer, and an incessant preacher. Beginning his ministry at thirty-nine, he spent twelve years at Antioch in Syria, and six under circumstances of continual storm and stress at Constantinople. He was but sixty when he died in banishment on the desolate ridges of the Taurus. Only when he was safely there did the Empress Eudoxia, his implacable foe, breathe freely. Once, indeed, his immense popularity had recalled him from exile, the people firing the cathedral and the senate house in Constantinople on the day when he was banished from the city. But no banishment could erase the memory of his words, or rid foe or friend of the effects of an eloquence which has now become the inheritance of the whole world. His interest in preaching led Chrysostom to write what is perhaps the earliest treatise on homiletics;² but it is by his sermons rather than by any treatise that he is remembered. They still remain, seventy-five homilies on Genesis, one hundred and forty on the Psalms, seventy-seven on the Prophets, fifty-four on the Acts, two hundred and forty-four on the Epistles, and they are alive to-day although their vigorous breath reaches us across seventeen centuries of dry bones. His commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians is especially rich in vivid thought. The stately compliment of Gibbon is richly merited: "The

¹ Hatch, p. 109; "Encyc. Britt.," *sub voce*; see Lives of Chrysostom, by Perthes, Stephen, and Macgilvray.

² Ker, p. 67.

monuments of that eloquence which was admired near twenty years at Antioch and Constantinople, have been carefully preserved; and the possession of one thousand sermons or homilies has authorized the critics of succeeding times to appreciate the genuine merit of Chrysostom. They unanimously attribute to the Christian orator the free command of an elegant and copious language; the judgment to conceal the advantages which he derived from the knowledge of rhetoric and philosophy; an inexhaustible fund of metaphors and similitudes, of ideas and images, to vary and illustrate the most familiar topics; the happy art of engaging the passions in the service of virtue, and of exposing the folly as well as the turpitude of vice, almost with the truth and spirit of a dramatic representation.” True, for the exposition of the Bible he was inadequately furnished. Constantinople in those days, and indeed all the Asiatic churches, used the Septuagint. He was often careless if not ignorant in his exegesis. His rhetoric would sometimes run away with his reason; but it is to his credit that he wisely kept himself to the literal or historical sense of the passage he was expounding, and as a rule let allegory alone. Chrysostom would not argue, as even Augustine does,¹ that the habit with which we credit the eagle, of beating her bill against a rock when it is overgrown, is symbolical of Christ taking away from man that which hinders his renovation. In his zeal for Bible study he spoke with great plainness to his congregations: “Which of you,” says he, “goes home to occupy himself in a Christian manner after church? Who takes the pains to read

¹ Trapp on Psalm 103:5.

the book, and apply himself to discover the sense of holy Scripture? No one will dare to say he does his best. Which of you who hears me now would be able to say by heart a psalm or some other part of Scripture if I were to ask this of him?"¹ He urged upon his hearers family religion: "What you hear that is useful, carry home in your mouth like the swallow, and put it in the mouths of the mother and children." The church, he reminds them, is not the only place for prayer. Tied though he be to his courts, the lawyer may raise his altar by simply cherishing a devout and serious spirit.

And this reference suggests that from the sermons of Chrysostom more than from all the other preachers of the century put together we can recover the features of that unsettled and tragic age.² We see the deacons place themselves around the pulpit and cry "Silence! Silence!" when the sermon is about to begin. The noisy throng fills the church—a flock, says the preacher, he cannot call it, for there is not a sheep among them, a stable, rather, for oxen, asses, and camels. They will not be quiet during the preliminary worship, they are talking about pleasure and about business, they are making bargains, they are breaking out in unseemly laughter. "We can pray at home," they say, "but we can only hear preaching at church." "And what will the sermon profit you," he retorts, "if it is not joined with prayer? First prayer, then the word, said the apostles." A venerable bishop occupied his pulpit on one occasion, and those who often winced under Chrysostom's preaching now went off whimper-

¹ "Church Quarterly Review," April, 1902, p. 23.

² Cf. "St. Chrysostom's Picture of the Religion of his Age."

ing over his substitute like whipped boys ; they cried out when he hit them, and yet are like children who return to their mother's side, catch hold of her dress, and are dragged along after her with sobs and tears. He preaches on repentance, and he notes that a crowd of soldiers and mechanics, as well as of those who have no business keeping them elsewhere, flock to hear him. Or, it is a wet day, and now a thin congregation chills the ardor of the few who attend. The plea for the poor is accompanied by a reference to the front row in the church filled with beggars. A sudden lighting up of the church diverting the attention of his hearers gives point to his remonstrance because they turn so readily from Christ the light of the world to those poor earthly lamps : "At the very time when I am setting forth before you the Scriptures, you are turning your eyes away from me, and fixing them upon the lamps, and upon the man who is lighting the lamps. Oh ! of what a sluggish soul is this the mark, to leave the preacher and turn to him. I too, am kindling the fire of the Scriptures ; and upon my tongue there is burning a taper, the taper of sound doctrine. Greater is this light and better, than the light that is yonder. For, unlike that man, it is no wick steeped in oil that I am lighting up. I am rather inflaming souls, moistened with piety, by the desire of heavenly discourse." The pickpockets are busy, and he detects them in time to warn his congregation to look out for their purses. We still seem to catch the perfume from the fashionable pews, to recover the sparkle of the gems, and to hear the great preacher as he surprises the gourmands with a sermon especially designed for those who before coming to

church have dined not wisely but too well. He was emphatically a preacher for the hour. Listen to him at a time of national panic when the people of Antioch have incurred the displeasure of the emperor by riot. See how he turns their panic to account in pressing the claims of God on those who are forgetful of his bounty: "A man has been insulted, and we are all in fear and trembling, both those of us who have been guilty of this insult, and those of us who are conscious of innocence. But God is insulted every day. Why do I say every day? Rather should I say every hour; by rich and by poor, by those who are at ease and those who are in trouble, by those who calumniate and those who are calumniated; and yet there is never a word of this; therefore God has permitted our fellow-servant to be insulted, that thou mayest know the lovingkindness of the Lord. This offense has been committed only for the first time, yet we do not, on that account, expect to reap the advantage of excuse or apology. We provoke God every day, and make no movement of returning to him; and yet he bears with all long-suffering; see you how great is the lovingkindness of the Lord. In this present outrage, the culprits have been apprehended, thrown into prison, and punished; and yet we are in fear. He who has been insulted has not heard of what has been done, or pronounced sentence; and we are all trembling. But God hears day by day the insults offered to him, and no one turns to him, although God is so kind and loving. With him it is enough to acknowledge the sin, and the guilt is absolved; . . . do you not hence conclude how unspeakable is the love of God, how boundless, how it surpasses all description?"

Eutropius, the fallen favorite of the emperor, is discovered clinging to the altar, while his foes, crowding about him, vow that the sanctity of the church shall no longer protect him. Between the abject wretch and the howling mob Chrysostom stands and preaches a sermon on vanity, pointing as he speaks to the culprit on whose face he sees the paleness of death, while his teeth chatter, his whole frame is convulsed, and his tongue stammers forth incoherent words. Behold the majesty of the gospel which can afford even to a man so base as he an asylum! Then he holds the blood-thirsty throng back while he bids them remember the Saviour's prayer for his enemies on the cross, nor does he desist until they actually join with him in a plea for mercy to be shown to Eutropius by the emperor. But he is as fearless with the empress, his relentless foe, as with the angry people or the fallen courtier. Banished by her from Constantinople, he comforts his brethren as he bids them farewell : "What can I fear ? Will it be death ? But you know that Christ is my life and that I shall gain by death. Will it be exile ? But the earth and all its fullness is the Lord's. Will it be the loss of wealth ? But we brought nothing into the world and can carry nothing out. Thus all the terrors of the world are contemptible in my eyes and I smile at all its good things. Poverty I do not fear. Riches I do not sigh for. Death I do not shrink from and life I do not desire save only for the progress of your souls. But you know, my friends, the true cause of my fall. It is that I have not lined my house with rich tapestry. It is that I have not clothed me in robes of silk. It is that I have not flattered the effeminacy and sensuality

of certain men nor laid gold and silver at their feet. But why need I say more? Jezebel is raising her persecution and Elijah must fly; Herodias is taking her pleasure and John must be bound with chains; the Egyptian wife tells her lie and Joseph must be thrust into prison. And so, if they banish me, I shall be like Elijah; if they throw me in the mire, like Jeremiah; if they plunge me into the sea, like the prophet Jonah; if into the pit, like Daniel; if they stone me, it is Stephen that I shall resemble; John the forerunner if they cut off my head; Paul if they beat me with stripes; Isaiah if they saw me asunder." When his persecutors, not daring to resist the indignant protests of the people of Constantinople, recalled him, his restoration was celebrated by the inevitable sermon: "Blessed be God, who allowed me to go forth; blessed again and again in that he has called me back to you. Blessed be God, who unchains the tempest; blessed be God, who stills it and has made a calm. . . Through all the diversity of time the temper of the soul is the same, and the pilot's courage has been neither relaxed by the calm nor overwhelmed by the tempest. . . See what the snares of my enemies have done. They have increased affection and kindled regret for me and have won me six hundred admirers. At other times it is our own body alone who love me. To-day the very Jews do me honor. . . It is not the enemies that I thank for their change of mind, but God, who has turned their injustice to my honor. The Jews crucified the Lord and the world is saved, yet it is not the Jews that I thank but the Crucified. May they see that which our God sees; the peace, the glory that their snares have been worth to

me. At other times the church alone used to be filled. Now the public square is become the church. All heads are as immovable as if they were one. All are silent, though no one orders silence. All are contrite too. There are games in the circus to-day, but no one assists at them. All flow to the temple like a torrent. The torrent is your multitude. The river's murmur is your voices, that rise up to heaven and tell of the love you bear to your Father. Your prayers are to me a brighter crown than all the diadems of earth."

In the matter of appeal surely never was preacher more powerful and certainly never was preacher more effective. It is thus that Doctor Macgilvray pictures the congregation : " As he advanced from exposition to illustration, from scriptural principle to practical appeals, his delivery became gradually more rapid, his countenance more animated, his voice more vivid and intense. The people began to hold in their breath. The joints of their loins were loosened. A creeping sensation like that produced by a series of electric waves passed over them. They felt as if drawn forwards toward the pulpit by a sort of magnetic influence. Some of those who were sitting rose from their seats ; others were overcome with a kind of faintness as if the preacher's mental force were sucking the life out of their bodies, and by the time the discourse came to an end the great mass of that spellbound audience could only hold their heads and give vent to their emotion in tears."

With Chrysostom we close the study of a group of preachers still rich in life. Their voices are in our ears to-day. Often it is hard to believe that they are not

preaching yet. There were dreary centuries at hand. The shadows of the dark ages soon wrapped Christendom in their gloom. But nothing can rob us of the splendid heritage bequeathed by Athanasius, the Adamantine; by Basil and Gregory Nazianzen, with their rich rhetoric; by Ambrose, the man among men; by Augustine, the noblest fruit of Ambrose's labor; by Chrysostom, of the golden mouth—all of them true to Christ and his Commission and earnest in witnessing for him before the shifting world and tempestuous times to which they brought their message.

V

DARKNESS AND LIGHT

(FROM THE FIFTH TO THE TENTH CENTURIES)

THE forces which would before long enervate Christianity, and by so doing lower the standard of preaching were already at work before the close of the fourth century. Chrysostom and Augustine had no immediate successors. Europe would have to wait almost a thousand years before she saw the like of the brilliant preachers whom we have been studying. The days of persecution had indeed almost passed. Constantine (A. D. 274-337), the Roman emperor, always a patron of the church, had, on the eve of his death, professed conversion in order to be baptized into the fold. The opposition of Julian despite its brilliance had been powerless to stem the rising tide. The empire of Rome had by this time fulfilled its destiny. It had ceased to be essential to the advance of civilization and culture. Indeed Rome was an empire no longer. Her growth had become her destroyer. From the Euphrates to the Thames her rule extended, but the time had come when no longer could her own soldiers hold this vast territory a coherent and compacted whole. The mercenary was called in to perform a task too heavy for the free-born Roman. Within the circle of what was nominally the empire of Rome barbarians and slaves were recruited into the ranks, and the old fervor of patriotism died out. When Alaric the Goth first

thundered at the gates of the imperial city (A. D. 410), and then stormed her walls and pillaged her treasures, Rome could render no assistance to Christianity; and Christianity herself, alike in the Eastern and the Western church, so far from having any message of life to deliver to the expiring empire was shamefully corrupt.

We must study the period of mingled darkness and light which extended from the fifth to the tenth centuries, in so far as during these gloomy years the pulpit had a visible history. Preaching is not a thing of itself. It has always been a voice to its times, and often, as we listen to its tones, we catch the voice of the times as well. An influence, indeed, it has never been independent of the life throbbing about it.

1. Naturally, therefore, the political features of these centuries would affect the pulpit. In the East a courtier, in the West the church, became a molding power. The intrigues of the palace drove Gregory Nazianzen and Chrysostom into exile. The Greek bishops who succeeded them degenerated into sycophants and time-servers. In the West, while the throne of the Cæsars was falling, another power was rising in the imperial city, which was to make her again, but now in a new sense, the mistress of the world. The priest took the place of the emperor.¹ In 800 Pope Leo III. suddenly placed a crown of gold on the head of Charles the German as he was worshiping in St. Peter's, and hailed him emperor. With his reign Charlemagne inaugurated the Holy Roman Empire, of which Voltaire said that it was neither holy nor Roman nor an empire. There should be only one empire—such

¹ Bryce, "The Holy Roman Empire," Chap. 4.

was the dream of the hierarchy—and there should be only one church; and the church should control the destinies of the empire. This was the culmination of centuries of intrigue, diplomacy, and craft. To these arts the church appealed, and for preaching save as their instrument, she had little use.

Meanwhile a formidable foe threatened Church and State alike. This was Mohammedanism. Its effect on preaching was not altogether malign. The Moslem invaded Europe, and held Spain for just five hundred years, and to this hour the Alhambra yet remains as only one of the evidences of his taste. The Saracen rocked the cradle of many of the sciences, and quickened in Europe a love for Greek literature. Of necessity he roused the church to a new interest in theology. When the crusades were preached not only did the pulpit find a distinct and inspiring message, but Europe came into contact with the East, and knight and squire made a thousand castles and manor houses in England, France, and Germany familiar with the scenes of Palestine, with the birthplace of the Saviour, and with his sepulchre.

2. The growth of priestly power to which we have referred was the chief ecclesiastical feature of these times. By its claim to loose and to bind the church obtained a hold on the consciences of men who would otherwise have scorned its pretensions. The dying act of the baron or of the merchant would often bequeath large endowments to the cathedral, the monastery and the college. The sacredness of sacerdotal functions and the efficacy of sacraments were things on which the preacher now insisted. Architecture and painting and music became the servants of the church.

In Europe to-day the signs of this remarkable ecclesiastical power meet us everywhere. "You have only to look from a distance at any old-fashioned city, and you will see in a moment the medieval relations between Church and State. The cathedral is the city. The first object you catch sight of as you approach is the spire tapering into the sky, or the huge towers holding possession of the center of the landscape, majestically beautiful, imposing by mere size amidst the large forms of nature herself. As that cathedral was to the old town, so was the church of the Middle Ages to the secular institutions of the world. Its very neighborhood was sacred; and its shadow, like the shadow of the apostles, was a sanctuary."¹ No spiritual power was required for sacerdotalism, for its priests, its ritual, its sanctuaries. Then, as always, preaching registered the low condition of personal religion. When the period we are considering drew to its close it must have seemed to the casual observer as though the pure and simple faith of Jesus was hopelessly dead. "Its foes were they of its own household. All sacred things had become venal. Crime and debauchery held revel in the Vatican, while the afflicted church, wedded at once to three husbands (such was the language of the times), witnessed the celebration of as many rival masses in the metropolis of Christendom."²

This conclusion of despair would, however, have been erroneous. Again and again in the dark ages we discover that preaching was still a power, and this because

¹ J. A. Froude, "Shorter Studies," Vol. I., p. 52. Cf. also Capes, "History of the English Church in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries," pp. 207-211.

² Sir Jas. Stephen, "Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography. Hildebrand."

the souls of men were crying out for the light. A council which met in the English county of Kent sometime in the eighth century declared preaching to be a duty of the bishops when they visited the churches. But unfortunately the bishops were often themselves rude and ignorant. As late as the sixteenth century, at the trial of one of the Protestant martyrs, the Bishop of Dunkeld could "exclaim merrily, 'I thank God that I never knew what the Old or the New Testament was.'" He was the last fruit on a decaying bough which had borne only too plentifully for twelve hundred years. When the bishop was incapable we need not be surprised that his clergy were the same. Few parish priests could preach. Charlemagne caused a collection of homilies from the Fathers to be prepared for reading in the churches.¹ To him we are also indebted for insisting that preaching must be not in Latin but in the vernacular. Alcuin, the friend and adviser of Charlemagne, was active in these reforms.² It is easy for us to object that these homilies by doing for the priest what he should have done for himself fostered laziness, but to a starving man even a borrowed loaf is better than no bread. When the homily was heard in the language spoken by the people it must have often been as welcome as is a familiar voice in a foreign land. When it was in Latin, on the other hand, it came to be a synonym for dryness, the congregation left the church when it began, or had even to be forced by ecclesiastical threats to remain and endure the accents of the unknown tongue.

I. Leo "the Great" (*born c. 390; made pope in 440*).

¹ Ker, p. 117.

² Brown, "Puritan Preaching in England," p. 11.

Among the leaders of the church there were no doubt men who could preach with great power. Leo the Great, by his eloquence saved Rome from the Hun and from the Vandal. He made no pretensions to the arts of the preacher, but, although often it might be with rugged directness, he never failed to deliver his message. His strong personality was felt as he spoke; arresting the barbarian at the gates of the city so dear to him from his childhood and now so near to her fall; rebuking emperors in no measured terms; and to the people infatuated for the sports of the amphitheatre crying, "I am ashamed to speak; but I ought not to keep silence. Demons are of more account to you than apostles, and insane exhibitions get a better attendance than the martyr commemorations."¹

II. Gregory I., "the Great" (*born c. 540; made pope 590*). A hundred and fifty years after Leo, Gregory the Great regretted that the cares of office robbed him of the chance he coveted of preaching, but to him we owe an elaborate "Rule for Pastors" in which he declares the art of teaching to be "the art of all arts,"² and instructs the preacher how to adapt himself to his hearers, "as one touches differently the different strings of a harp to make them sound in harmony." To Gregory also belongs the deathless distinction of starting the mission which brought Christianity to the southern parts of Britain, a mission to which, but that he was forcibly detained in Rome by the citizens who refused to spare him, he would have devoted his own life. The theological controversies which the fourth century be-

¹ Sears, "Oratory," pp. 172-174.

² Storrs, "Bernard of Clairvaux," pp. 359, 360.

queathed to the years immediately following were of no practical assistance to preaching. The so-called Athanasian Creed, when by and by it was formulated, darkened counsel with words. The fierce discussions over such terms as "Substance" and "Person," the battles over the person and will of our Lord did nothing for the common people who of old had heard him gladly. The fall of Rome, A. D. 476, bringing new faces and tongues into Italy, only intensified the controversy, for the invaders of Italy were themselves Arians;¹ and the culture of a hundred years later introducing a taste for philosophy in the form of a Christianized Neo-Platonism, influenced religious thought, but not in the direction of plain speech and popular utterance.

The reference to the hordes of Goths, Vandals, and Huns who, swarming down through the Alpine passes and along the sides of the Apennines, filled the fertile plain of Umbria and the sunny fields of central Italy with the terror of their prowess, suggests the direction to which we must look for a brighter side to this dark picture. God fulfills himself in many ways. In Rome, in Constantinople, in Alexandria, in the great centers of life and thought, the religion of Jesus in its early purity was now hard to find. But on the outskirts of civilization this was not so. Christianity seemed to have reverted to its original marching orders. It became distinctly missionary in its character. From the shores of the Black Sea and across the heart of Europe to the shores of Britain you can draw a line which in those years of gloom is nowhere far distant from the preaching of the cross in much of its primitive directness and fervor.

¹ Hodgkin, "Theodoric," p. 180.

"The teaching of the medieval missionaries" as Maclear puts it,¹ "from first to last was eminently objective. It dealt mainly and simply with the great facts of Christianity; with the incarnation of the Saviour, his life, his death, his resurrection, his ascension, his future coming, and then proceeded to treat of the good works that ought to flow from the vital reception of the Christian doctrines."

The very remoteness of the countries where the gospel was preached by the early missionaries must have helped to keep it in some measure true to the first Commission. And the evidence is strong that the missionary spirit never died out. Gibbon, the historian, believes that before the reign of Diocletian, A. D. 284-305, "the faith of Christ had been preached in all the great cities of the empire." We have equally good reason for thinking that not in the cities alone but in the countries across which marched the legions of Rome, the religion of Christ had been generally proclaimed.

III. *Ulfila (311-381).* Ulfila, the apostle of the Goths, was a contemporary of Athanasius, and died ten years before Leo, who was afterward to become "The Great," was born. About the name of Ulfila, "The Little Wolf," legend has woven a romance which cannot be entirely fictitious.² We know that he was noble by birth, and that while yet a young man he was sent by his tribe on the Danube, either as a hostage or as an ambassador, to the court of Constantinople. There he may have been converted, certainly there he learned

¹ Maclear, "Christian Missions in the Middle Ages," p. 421.

² See C. A. Anderson Scott, "Ulfila, Apostle of the Goths"; Hodgkin, "Theodoric the Goth."

Greek and Latin, so that in after life in preaching he could use either of them as fluently as his native Gothic tongue. At Constantinople he was appointed a missionary bishop, and no doubt began to preach among his own countrymen, soldiers in the Roman army, courtiers in the palace and high places of the empire, or traders in her thriving cities. To Constantinople he came back in his old age, in obedience to a summons of the emperor, and there where he had found the faith which he had so long kept, he died. That faith as it first came to him was tinctured with Arianism; throughout his life he was opposed to Athanasius, and in the hour of death he prefaced his written creed with the words, "Ulfilas, bishop and confessor, has always thus believed." To his convictions he was loyal all his life long; and also to his consecration as an apostle to his own countrymen. Returning to the Danube from the first embassage to Constantinople he gave himself up heart and soul to this work. The Goths of his tribe became Christians under his instruction, and when persecution drove them out of their land he led them across the Danube in a body and with them settled on the other shore safe on Roman soil. In their hearing he preached the gospel; among them he organized the Christian church; to them he brought the civilizing influence of his noble and inspiring personality; and for their sakes he translated the Scriptures into their own tongue, leaving as his most precious legacy the famous manuscript, which is known to-day as the "*Codex Argenteus*" and which in its silver letters on purple vellum, bound in a heavy silver case, is the pride of the Swedish University of Upsala.

IV. Martin of Tours (*c. 316*). About the same time the Franks were evangelized by the vigorous preaching of Martin, soldier and missionary monk; a soldier when with his strong right arm he dealt blows at their idols, a missionary when he preached a purer religion. Settling in Tours in France, and gathering his converts into a fellowship, he became the virtual founder of the Gallican church.

V. Patrick (*c. 372-465*). The fifth century was yet in its infancy when a young Scotchman after six years of slavery in the north of Ireland was set free to return home. In his waking and sleeping hours the remembrance of the country of his captivity haunted him. Across the western sea came a vision to him in his dreams. "We entreat thee, holy youth, to come to walk with us." Patrick, as Paul before him, determined that he would not be disobedient to the heavenly vision. For more than thirty years he preached the gospel to his former captors, until multitudes of them became with him the bondslaves of Christ. The Celtic church was the fruit of his labors. A three-leaved shamrock was often his text, as with the echoes of the Arian controversy coming faintly to his ears across the waters, he illustrated and enforced the doctrines of the Trinity. His ardent love for God and man and his intense devotion to his Saviour, live to this hour in the thoughts of the hymn which he constantly chanted as he went on his way :

Christ with me, Christ before me,
Christ behind me, Christ in me,
Christ below me, Christ above me,
Christ at my right, Christ at my left,

Christ in breadth, Christ in length,
Christ in height.

“For me to live is Christ” was the burden of Patrick’s life as well as of his hymn :

Christ in the heart of every one who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of every one who speaks of me,
Christ in the eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.

VI. Columba (521-597). Ireland repaid her debt to Scotland when she gave her Columba and the great number of missionaries who were the result of his teaching. The little island off the wild western shore of Scotland preserves the memory of his triumphs as teacher and preacher. How dearly he loved the country which he had left we know from his own passionate lines to his native place :

My little oak grove !
My dwelling, my home, and my own little cell,
May God the eternal in heaven above
Send death to thy foes, and care for thee well.

VII. Augustine of Canterbury (566-607). The evangelizing zeal of Patrick and Columba sent forth missionaries to lands as distant as France and Germany, but southern England itself was reached in another way. Passing through a slave mart in Rome, some years before he became pope, Gregory was impressed by the beauty and intelligence of a band of young Saxon captives. “Not Angles but angels if only they were Christians” he said, and when he himself was prevented from coming to Britain as a missionary, he

dispatched Augustine, a young monk, who landed near Canterbury, and preached to the tribes in that part of the island. The message of Augustine, earnest though it may have been, was not so simple and winning as that of the northern missionaries; and the church which he founded with Canterbury as its center, followed from the first the Roman rather than the apostolic model.

VIII. Bede (673-735). We catch a clearer note as we listen to Bede, who from his little cell at Jarrow on the Tyne, swayed the mightiest influence of his generation over the whole north of England. It is by his translations of the Scriptures that he is chiefly remembered to-day. In his own time he was teacher, counselor, and guide to thousands of his countrymen.¹ His sermons as they remain to us now are mainly expository, but there are also above twenty very short discourses, "manifestly addressed to country congregations and probably taken down by an admirer or disciple of the preacher." The fancy of the preacher sometimes outstrips his judgment, and not infrequently, as was perhaps natural from the time when he lived,—"the hopeless century" as it has been called,—he dwells with morbid detail on the miseries of the lost. But his happier hours were bright with the prospect of heaven; "the squadrons of saints adorned with stars; the apostles who still judge the whole world; the martyrs decked with purple diadems of victory. . . . But of the King who is in the midst, no words are able to speak. . . . God is greater than the glory of all the saints, but to attain to that ineffable sight, and to be made radiant with the splendor of his countenance, is

¹ Neale, "Medieval Preachers and Medieval Preaching," pp. 1-19.

it not worth while to endure earthly sorrows that we may be partakers of such good and of such glory?"

Patrick and Columba, Augustine and Bede, impress us with the interest which barbarous tribes felt in the preaching of the gospel. Still it was the power of God unto salvation. Gregory the Great might not be able himself to come to Britain. Amid multitudinous cares he might not be able to preach as abundantly as he wished; but he sent Augustine to Britain in his stead, to the home of the yellow-haired slave; and himself drew up the elaborate "rules for pastors,"¹ to which we have already referred, and which Alfred the Great, at the close of the ninth century, translated into Anglo-Saxon for the benefit of his clergy.

IX. Winifred, or Boniface (*b. 689*). Meanwhile in Germany and along the Baltic the same message was being delivered and before it idolatry was falling. Winifred, the Devonshire monk, better known by his name in its Latinized form of Boniface, illustrates the movement which, coming from the British Isles, sent evangelists among the heathen tribes of Europe. Into Thuringia, Bavaria, Friesland, Hesse, Saxony he went, hewing down sacred oaks, shattering ancient idols; and then, telling his disciples that he was going to his death, turned back to Friesland, and in the Moordwonda—the wood of murder—fell with fifty of his companions before the fury of a pagan mob.² The crown of martyrdom was his, and a new and lustrous meaning shone on his own inspiring vision of glory: "There shall be life

¹ Storrs, "Bernard of Clairvaux."

² Neale, p. 21. See Phelps Dodge, "From Squire to Prince," p. 17. Van Dyke, "The First Christmas Tree."

with God without the fear of death ; there unending light and never darkness ; there safety which no sickness disturbs ; . . . there eternal glory with angels and archangels, with patriarchs and prophets, with confessors and with the holy virgins who follow Christ whithersoever he goeth."

X. Anschar (*b. 801*). XI. Adelbert (*b. 997*). Anschar carried Christianity into Denmark and Sweden, and northern Germany. Through Poland and Prussia went Adelbert (born when the tenth century was near its close), singing and preaching the gospel until the lance of a heathen transfixes him, and for a time, but only for a time, arrested the spread of Christianity along the shores of the Baltic.

These men were missionaries of the Cross, preachers of the gospel, who true to its spirit counted not their lives dear unto them. They, and not the priests, bishops, and cardinals in Italy, were successors of the brave men who in the first and second centuries made Christianity a power to be reckoned with by the empire. "The monks," says Froude, "among the O's and the Mac's were as defenseless as sheep among the wolves, but the wolves spared them for their character. The first missionaries of Christianity when they came among the heathen nations and found them worshiping idols did not care much to reason that an image which man had made could not be God. The priests might have been a match for them in reasoning. They walked up to the idol in the presence of its votaries. They threw stones at it, spat upon it, insulted it. 'See,' they said, 'I do this to your god. If he is God, let him revenge himself.' It was a simple argument ;

always effective; easy, and yet most difficult. It required merely a readiness to be killed upon the spot by the superstition which it outraged."

The tenth century covers the gloomiest period in all Christianity. The light that was in the church was darkness, and how great was that darkness the historians of the period tell us. At the prospect of the political insecurity and the ecclesiastical shamelessness of the age, the hearts of men failed them for fear. It was now a thousand years after the birth of Christ, and the coming of the end of the world was the burden of sermon and song. The believers everywhere held that the days of our earth were numbered. But the night is darkest before the dawn. Daybreak, not destruction, was at hand. Mohammedanism, which had prepared Europe for the renaissance, was itself arrested in its onward march by the victory of Charles Martel, and the resistless line of Moslem advance which had been carried above one thousand miles from the rock of Gibraltar to the banks of the Loire, was finally broken "by the breasts which were like solid ramparts, and the arms which were iron." Hildebrand (made pope 1073), a greater pontiff than either Leo or Gregory, was to strike with relentless hand at the corruptions of the church and insist on their reform. During all this dark period preaching, neglected in the pulpits of a degenerate and ignorant clergy, had made its voice to be heard far-off among the heathen, and in doing so had recovered somewhat of its pristine simplicity and power. We can now see how these early missionaries carrying the gospel in this simple form to Germany and Britain sowed the seed of the Protestant Reformation.

VI

DAYBREAK

(FROM THE ELEVENTH TO THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY)

LONGFELLOW wrote his "Golden Legend" in part to show that "through the darkness and corruption of the Middle Ages ran a bright deep stream of faith strong enough for all the exigencies of life."

That this judgment was sound as well as hopeful we might infer from the evangelizing work of the missionaries who from Ulfilas to Adelbert toiled in the wastes of heathen Europe until the wilderness blossomed as the rose. Nor must we forget the influence of the Bible through all these centuries. "Preaching in the first sense of the word," Selden asserted, "ceased as soon as ever the gospel was written."¹ Only by a very limited definition of preaching can this be taken as true. To relieve the intolerable isolation of his monkish cell at Bethlehem, Jerome (c. 345-c. 420) devoted himself to the revision of the Scriptures, and in time produced the Vulgate which remained for a thousand years the most influential work in existence. The Vulgate was completed at a time when the foundations of the world with which Jerome was familiar seemed to be hopelessly shattered. The Roman Empire was invaded by Northern hordes. At the bidding of Alaric the Goth the imperial city opened her gates

¹ "Table Talk."

and surrendered herself to ruthless massacre and pil-
lage. Palestine and Egypt were plundered by the
Arabs. The last word in his fierce controversy with
Pelagius was not spoken when death silenced the
lips of Jerome. But his monument remained in the
Latin Vulgate, and, of better service than most monu-
ments, it became the one unchangeable influence for
good through the troubled centuries which followed.
To this hour it is ranked by the Romanist as an
authority second only to the voice of his church. The
Vulgate furnished the texts for the sermons of the
Middle Ages, and so far from preaching ceasing when
the Scriptures were given to the world in written form,
what preaching there was drew from them its inspira-
tion and authority. There are not lacking incidental
evidences that preaching never lost its hold on the
people. The rules for the art, drawn up by Gregory
the Great were in use two hundred years after his time
at the court of Charlemagne, and a century later yet,
as we have seen, they were translated for the benefit of
the clergy, by Alfred of England. In the estimation
of Charlemagne, indeed, preaching seems to have been
an essential part of the priest's office.¹ In the revival
of the church to which he set himself he insisted on
the study of the Scriptures under the guidance of the
clergy. "The Council of Mayence² decreed that if
the bishop were absent for any necessary reason some
one should always be present to preach on Sundays
and on fast-days; and the Council of Arles directed in
the same year that not only in cities but in country

¹ Brown, "Puritan Preaching in England," p. 12.

² A. D. 813. Storrs, "Bernard of Clairvaux," p. 365.

parishes as well the priests should preach." The frequency with which the duty of preaching is referred to no doubt argues that the temptation to neglect it was too generally yielded to. This we cannot question, but it also shows what importance was attached to the sermon.

With the eleventh century came Hildebrand (A. D. 1020-1085), who, after having been prominent in making five successive popes, heard his own name lifted on a tempest of tongues in the great church of the Lateran, breaking the solemn strains of the requiem which was being sung for the last of these, and proclaiming that by the will of God he himself was elected pontiff. Hildebrand, or as he now became, Gregory the Seventh, is the first unifying personage whose figure we behold in the distractions of many centuries. Bearing a German name he was nevertheless Tuscan born, but he rose above all merely national distinctions, and abjuring pleasure and refusing to allow either himself or the world which he controlled to be governed by ignoble ease, he gave himself to the task of restoring to the church of Christ her ancient power and purity. To do this it was clear to Hildebrand that 'there could be but one fold. Separatists from the fold must be reasoned with, and if still stubborn they must be punished even to the death. The incessant wars in which Hildebrand engaged, mainly in order to break the spirit of Emperor Henry, and to give the church supremacy over the State in Germany as well as in Italy, did not divert his mind from the effort to unite in one body the hosts of Christendom. Missionaries carried the cross to Hungary, Bohemia, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. Under his direction

the evangelizing preaching of earlier centuries was no doubt continued, although not now in a form so free from ecclesiastical assumption.

If Hildebrand was the first unifying figure of the time, the first unifying influence was found in the Crusades. A European crusade to recover for Christendom the holy places of the Gospels was the dream of Gregory, the magnificent idealist. It was reserved for his friend and successor, Urban the Second, to transform the vision into a reality. On a lofty temporary scaffold at Clermont, in Auvergne, A. D. 1105, Urban preached to thousands of excitable priests and laymen the duty of at once rescuing Jerusalem from the defiling possession of the infidels; and when he closed a universal cry, "God wills it! God wills it!" announced the inauguration of the first crusade.¹

I. Peter the Hermit (1050-1115). Already the heart of Christendom was prepared for the summons from the lips of the one man who could speak with authority as the earthly vicegerent of God. Peter the Hermit had made France familiar with the awful story of the outrages which were inflicted on pilgrims to the holy sites. The transforming power of a master passion has never been better illustrated than in Peter. In person small and contemptible, with only a soldier's training, unversed in the learning of the schools, already a widower and past the meridian of life, Peter returned from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, aflame with the ambition to deliver the message which he believed that the Lord had in person given him. Now in churches, now in the highways, now in the market-places, he told with

¹ Storrs, p. 111.

tireless energy to all classes of people, regardless of rank or circumstances, the story of the dishonored sepulchre. He carried a great crucifix, and appealed to it with passionate gestures; tears flowed from his eyes, and words choked in his throat as he surrendered himself to the emotion which possessed his whole being. The first crusade cost Europe half a million lives and drained her of much of her richest and noblest blood, but it did more than anything else to restore unity to a distracted world; and it was a direct result of the preaching of one poor unlettered soldier.

It is not difficult to find the sources of Peter's success. "His preaching appealed to every passion, to valor and shame, to indignation and pity, to the pride of the warrior, to the compassion of the man, to the religion of the Christian, to the love of the brethren, to the hatred of the unbeliever, aggravated by his insulting tyranny; to reverence for the Redeemer of the saints; to the desire of expiating sin; to the hope of eternal life."¹ The secret of Peter's success is one which we also need to learn. Appeal to the heroic and to the devout in human nature, nor ignore the desire which lies in every human breast for personal salvation. "There is a work," cried Urban from his platform at Clermont, and Peter from his curbstone in the market-place, "for all to do. This earth is the Lord's and in your crusade you will not pass beyond his care; the fullness thereof is his, and for your self-sacrifice he will see that you receive a thousand-fold in this life. Should you fall in his service, with sins forgiven and heaven assured, you will leap from the arena of conflict to the conqueror's throne."

¹ Milman, "Latin Christianity," Book VII., Chap. 6.

Europe rose responsive to the appeal of the crusading preacher, because then, as always, men need to be roused, to be shamed, to be stimulated.

II. *Bernard of Clairvaux (1091-1153).* With the second crusade, nearly fifty years later, we associate the name of a greater man than Peter the Hermit, and a very different kind of a preacher—Bernard of Clairvaux. Nobly born of a saintly mother, Bernard grew up with an intense love for the Scriptures and a passionate devotion to Christ. To follow the footsteps of his Lord was the delight of his quiet hours and the inspiration of his preaching. “These things,” he said to his congregation, “are often on my lips, as you know; they are always in my heart, as God knows; they are ever familiar to my pen, as is evident to all; and this is constantly my highest philosophy, to know Jesus Christ and him crucified.”¹ This is the devotion which we catch in his own hymns, “O sacred head now wounded” and “Jesus, the very thought of thee.” It remains to us embalmed in his noblest hymn, “My God, I love thee.” “Bernard,” as Luther says, “loved Jesus as much as did any man.” Dante sees him in Paradise with the spirit of his Master triumphant in him:

O'erflowing was he in his eyes and cheeks
With joy benign.

And the poet immortalizes in his verse

The living
Charity of the man, who in this world
By contemplation tasted of that peace.²

¹ “*Sermons from the Canticles*,” Vol. I., p. 13.

² Dante, “*Paradiso*,” 26 : 57-94.

That Bernard understood the use of righteous indignation, his famous controversy with Abelard (1079-1142) proves. Abelard was a man who, by virtue of clearness of expression, affluence of imagination, and lightness of touch, possessed a fascinating eloquence. As Bernard did not, he challenged to controversy not so much for the love of truth as for the joy of conflict. "I went wherever dialectics flourished," he says. He wandered from place to place, so "loosening the tongue and sharpening the wit, that throughout his life the proudest orators and thinkers of Christendom shrank in dismay from the thought of a verbal encounter with him." In comparison with Abelard, Bernard confessed that he himself was a child. But the one was stained with base and ignoble passion, the other had the blessing of the pure in heart who see God. For many years the controversy between these two divided Europe. We are not concerned with the conflict here, but at one of Abelard's disciples we must glance in passing because he was without doubt a powerful preacher. Arnold of Brescia (1100-1155) was a reformer before the Reformation. He early espoused the views of Abelard, and incurred the hostility of Bernard. He denounced the temporal power of the pope, and in the city of Rome headed a revolt against him. He was betrayed, delivered up to the papal authorities, hanged, and burned. In history he ranks with Rienzi, the tribune for an hour, and Savonarola, the reformer for a period scarcely longer. They and others, stirred by the abuses of the time, missed their way, indeed, when they undertook to mend them, but they merit the honor which we pay to men in whom high failure transcends low success.

We cherish the memory of Bernard not for his forgotten controversies but for the sweet and serene temper which breathed in his hymns, and the fervor of devotion to his Lord which inspired his sermons. His character not less than his eloquence gave him his immense power. He had not feared to rebuke kings, to wrestle with fierce and turbulent leaders, to demand that invading forces pause. The poor all Europe over learned to respect his name as that of their constant benefactor. The simplicity of his own life shamed the luxury of the nobles and the clergy. The peasants of the Alps left their flocks to seek his blessing, and when he visited Milan high and low went miles beyond their city walls to meet and welcome him. In Paris preaching to the schools of philosophy he failed the first time, but after a night spent in deep searchings of heart, the unction of God rested on his word and numbers were converted. In Germany he insisted that he who would join the crusading army must first repent of his sins. In Toulouse he called for a show of hands from those who were willing to return to the bosom of the church, and "the air was filled with quivering palms."¹ At Vezelai, in France, he was called to preach, before the pope and the king, Louis VII., the second crusade. It was the high day of his life. The vast crowd might not be able to catch his words, but they could at least see his face. The light of his countenance shone on the great assemblage, while the flash of tenderness and terror from those wonderful eyes, his words of love and aspiration, the incentives he urged to self-sacrifice, and his appeals for instant consecration to the service of their betrayed Mas-

¹ Storrs, p. 415.

ter were caught by the throng, and borne to its utmost bounds. Then rose the cry for "Crosses! crosses!" the murmur as the voice of many water from the sea of faces. He scattered them broadcast among the people. The supply was soon exhausted. He tore up his monk's cowl to satisfy the demand. "He did nothing but make crosses so long as he remained in the town. The mind of Europe spoke by Bernard. The crusade was proclaimed. And now he traveled through Germany to preach the second crusade at Freiburg, Basel, Constance, Spires, Cologne, Frankfort, Mayence; and, wherever he went, there the same tumult gathered around him. A daily repetition of the scene on the hill of Vezelai took place. A simultaneous rush of the whole population to see him and to hear him, and then the assumption of the cross by the larger portion of the able-bodied male inhabitants."¹ Bernard says, that scarcely one man was left to seven women. This is an example of the occasional preaching of Bernard. The hour and the man met, and the air was electric with the magnetism alike of the theme and of the speaker. A calmer spirit and one more in consonance with his sweet and serene nature breathes through other of his discourses. In all the literature of the pulpit there is nothing nobler than Bernard's funeral sermon for his own brother Gerard.²

To whom was I equally dear? He was my brother by blood, but more than brother by religion. Deplore my misfortune, I beseech you, who know these things. I was weak in body, and he sustained me; downcast in spirit, and he comforted me; slow and negligent, and he stimulated me; careless and forgetful, and

¹ E. P. Hood.

² Morison, "Life and Times of Bernard," p. 227.

he admonished me. Whither hast thou been torn from me—whither hast thou been carried from my arms, O thou man of one mind with me, thou man after my own heart? We loved each other in life ; how are we separated in death ! Oh, most bitter separation, which nothing could have accomplished but death ! For when wouldest thou have deserted me in life? Truly, a horrible divorce, altogether the work of death. Who would not have had pity on the sweet bond of our mutual love but death, the enemy of all sweetness? Well has raging death done his work ; for by taking one, he has stricken two. Is not this death to me also? Yea, verily, more to me than to Gerard—to me, to whom life is preserved, far gloomier than any death. . . In place of us, dearest brother, whom thou hast not with thee to-day, what an exceeding multitude of joys and blessings is thine ! Instead of me thou hast Christ ; nor canst thou feel thy absence from thy brethren here, now that thou rejoicest in choruses of angels. Nothing, therefore, can make thee deplore the loss of our society, seeing that the Lord of majesty and the hosts of heaven vouchsafe to thee their presence. But what have I in thy stead ? What would I not give to know what thou now thinkest of thy Bernard, tottering amid cares and afflictions, and bereaved of thee, the staff of my weakness ? if, indeed, it be permitted to one who is plunged into the abyss of light and absorbed in the great ocean of eternal felicity still to think of the miserable inhabitants of the earth. It may be that though thou knewest us in the flesh, thou knowest us no more, and since thou hast entered into the powers of the Lord, thou rememberest only his justice, forgetful of us. Moreover, he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit, and is entirely changed into one holy feeling ; neither can he think of or wish for aught but God and the things which God thinks and wishes, being full of God. But God is love, and the more closely a man is united to God the fuller he is of love. Further, God is without passions, but not without sympathy, for his nature is always to have mercy and to spare. Therefore, thou must needs be merciful, since thou art joined to the merciful One ; although misery now be far from thee, thou canst compassionate others although thou sufferest not thyself. Thy love is not weakened but changed. Nor because thou hast put on God hast thou laid aside all care for us, for “he

also careth for us." Thou hast discarded thine infirmities, but not thy affections. "Charity never faileth": thou wilt not forget me at the last.

The intense solicitude for a purer life among the people, which led Bernard to put repentance for sin before a readiness to go on a crusade, was no doubt characteristic of many other preachers of the period who are now forgotten. Such an evangelist was Norbert, founder of the order of the Remonstrants, who went throughout Germany and France calling men to repent, and meeting them in private to talk of the state of their souls; and Robert of Arbrissel, who in his preaching made each hearer feel as though he was singled out for a personal appeal; and one other, an obscure priest, whose name is unknown to us, who, suddenly seized by the persuasion that he had been injuring his people by his neglect, went to Paris to learn what to preach, and then delivered his message with such effect that vast crowds gathered to listen to him, and the nation itself was shaken with his plain and fervent preaching.¹

The lights and shadows of the times are preserved for us by the namesake of Bernard of Clairvaux, Bernard of Clugny, whose "Celestial Country" is to-day one of the great hymns of the church universal:

And now we fight the battle, but then shall wear the crown
Of full and everlasting and passionless renown;
For now we watch and struggle, and now we live by hope,
And Zion in her anguish with Babylon shall cope;
But he whom now we trust in shall then be seen and known,
And they who know and see him shall have him for their own.

¹ Neander, "History of the Christian Church," Vol. IV., p. 209; Storr's "Bernard," p. 370.

The crusading fervor was only a temporary enthusiasm. On a foundation so uncertain as that, no permanent revival of preaching could be built. Even the occasional glimpses which we get of such men as Norbert and Robert of Arbrissel only serve, as stars on a black heaven, to discover how dense was the darkness of the times. It is certain that in the twelfth century the sermon was generally looked upon as the special privilege of the bishop, and that even by him preaching was more honored in the breach than the observance. In England "a parson might hold a benefice for fifty years and never once have written or composed a sermon. A sermon was an event in those days, and a preacher with any real gifts of oratory was looked upon as a prophet sent by God."¹ His sermon was supernatural. When in 1200 Eustace, Abbot of Flai, preached in various parts of the country, miracles were said to be wrought by his eloquence. To remedy the neglect or abuse of preaching heroic treatment was needed. There must be organized effort back of individual genius. The genius was furnished by two of the greatest figures in the annals of the pulpit, Dominic and Francis of Assisi, the organization by the Orders of Preaching Friars, the Dominicans and Franciscans.

III. Dominic (1170-1220). Dominic was a Spaniard, with the lofty birth which to the Spaniard means so much, and the training among ecclesiastics which was almost certain, in the case of one naturally sombre in temper and intense in spirit, to produce a bigot. Looking abroad over Europe with the eye of a churchman, he saw everywhere evils to be remedied—Moors to the

¹ Jessopp, "The Coming of the Friars," pp. 9, 86.

south, Jews all around him, across the Pyrenees Albigenses, and worse than all else, ignorance on the part of the church itself, and no purity of life, no fervor of faith, no devotion of spirit, with which to combat these errors. In 1205 he began to itinerate through southern France among the Albigenses, the earliest and simplest of Protestants, and when his tongue failed to win them to the fold of Rome, his hands took to the sword. Severity might succeed where persuasion had been baffled. It was heresy even more than ungodliness which distressed Dominic. Traveling to Denmark on a mission for the court of Spain, he was astounded at the universal corruption in civil and ecclesiastical life. "Churches," as Francis of Assisi put it, "without people,¹ people without priests, priests without respect, Christians without Christ, holy places denied to be holy, the sacraments no longer sacred, and holy days without their solemnity." To reform these evils Dominic resorted to preaching. He formed a small religious community near Toulouse, which aimed through the pulpit to confute heretics and instruct the unlearned. To obtain the approval of the pope he traveled to Rome, and when his Order took shape and gained power Rome became the center of his operations. He had many of the gifts which compel rather than win admiration. His careful training in ecclesiastical lore, his skill in argument, his concentration of purpose, his unflagging zeal, his unwearying patience fitted him for a leader. He and his followers were from the first preachers. Later the General of the Dominican Order, Hubert de Romanis, issued a work, "*De Eruditione*

¹ Milman, Vol. IV., p. 178.

Prædicatorum,” in which the sermon is placed even higher than the mass. “Of the Latin Liturgy¹ the laity understand nothing, but they can understand the sermon.” The crowds which follow the true preacher, Hubert argued, showed how ready were the people to hear and receive the message. From his directions to the brethren it is plain that the old-time homily receives small mercy at his hands. The homilies of Charlemagne, with their flowers culled from the pleasant fields of the Fathers, were now out of date. Allegory and mysticism and the interpretation of Scripture were not needed. Far-fetched texts were not worth the bringing. A contemporary of Hubert writing on the same subject expresses his judgment as to the true source of homiletical power: “Let the sermon be preceded by prayer; so that the soul fired with divine love may utter forth what it feels of God with glowing words; so that the preacher, as he burns in his own heart may enkindle a flame also in the hearts of his hearers.” Recognized by the pope and formed into a distinct order, the Dominicans speedily made their power felt. To this hour the black cloak outside the white habit suggests a sermon, and a long line of noble preachers perpetuates the wisdom as well as the devotion of Dominic. The Dominican preacher used the vernacular. “Low Latin,” such as the bishops employed, was avoided. The understanding of his simple audiences was appealed to directly by telling illustrations, anecdotes, fables, legends, and grotesque fancies. Their fears were reached through coarsely colored pictures of the torments of the lost, their hopes by pictures

¹ Brown, p. 17 *et seq.*

no less coarse of the glories of paradise. The mission cross, raised in the market-place, in the public square, at cross-roads, gathered the crowd, and the friars became the most famous of open-air preachers. The Dominicans did not lack scholarship. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) furnished, in the "*Summa Theologiæ*," the groundwork for appeals to the intellect, and bound the preacher down to a clear if scholastic system of doctrine. But their path led away from the cloister, and their home was among the people. One night during his early visit to Rome, Dominic, unable to rid his mind for an hour of the mission of his time, saw in his dream two men presented to Christ by the Virgin Mary, as chosen to avert the wrath which threatened to fall on a corrupt and faithless church. In one of them he recognized himself. But who was the second? When morning dawned he entered a neighboring church to worship, and in a poor mendicant he beheld the object of his search. "My brother! my companion!" exclaimed Dominic, "let us unite our powers and nothing shall prevail against us."

IV. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226). The mendicant was Francis of Assisi, who had wedded Poverty as his bride, and was now in Rome on an errand similar to Dominic's.¹ The little city of his birth as it lies to-day white on the hillside overlooking the valley of the Tiber, is very unlike the Assisi in which Francis was born. Now it is an ecclesiastical center, the place of pilgrimage to which thousands of devout hearts turn with feeling almost akin to those which stir the devout

¹ See Sabatier, "Francis of Assisi," and Stephen, "Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography."



FRANCIS OF ASSISI.

traveler when he reaches Bethlehem. Then it was a busy and thriving mart, secular rather than religious in its association, and young Francis was destined by his father, a prosperous merchant, to inherit the business which he had built up. The boy was bright, genial, popular, diligent in the counting-house, but eager for pleasure, and foremost in the frays to which the young men of Assisi challenged the neighboring towns. In a combat with the citizens of Perugia, a few miles across the valley, Francis was taken prisoner, and scarcely had he recovered his liberty before he was stricken with a disease which brought him within sight of the gates of death. In the hours of his captivity, and on his sick-bed he had time to think. What was life to live? The world—what was shadow in it, and what substance? He returned to health a new man, and henceforth, with only one brief relapse, his heart, surrendered to the service of Christ and his word, held loyal to its Master and its mission. He also founded an order of preachers, but between him and Dominic there was little in common, save a burning desire to win the world for Christ and his church. To Francis had been given the sunniest of natures, an enthusiasm which was contagious, a sweetness of spirit which nothing could sour, a hopefulness which faced the world confidently, and an endurance which carried him successfully through a life of perpetual hardship and suffering, until, like Whitefield, tired in the service of his master but not of it, he laid himself down on the bare ground, to die. He was scarcely forty-four years old, but his was a life which years could not measure. Far away indeed, in that hour, must have seemed the day

when his father, the merchant, meeting this son of his, the heir to his fortune, the light of his eyes, the pride of his heart, a squalid and emaciated beggar, had first soundly chastised and then chained him up in his room. Yet although the interval was crowded with incidents it could have covered scarcely twenty years. It was evening and the western sky was aglow with the radiance which follows an autumnal sunset behind the hills of central Italy. The requiem for the dead ceased, and the faltering voice of Francis was heard in the language of David, exclaiming, "*Voce mea ad Dominum clamavi.*"¹ His attendants bent over him as he pursued the divine song, and caught his last breath, as he uttered, "Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks unto thy name." In Francis met the preacher and the philanthropist. He began his new life by changing clothes with a tattered mendicant. He was the apostle to the lepers, and his own hands washed their wounds and dressed their sores. Of him it came to be said, "He remembers those whom God has forgotten." The very birds knew him for their friend; the doves in his convent fluttered about him, or lay on his bosom; in the plumage of the lark rising at his feet he recognized the Franciscan colors; his voice joined in the vespers of the nightingale; and he preached to the starlings as they chattered: "My dear sisters, you have talked long enough, it is my turn now, listen to the word of your brother, and be quiet."

Francis was to a far greater extent than Dominic the preacher who first himself feeling, then made others feel. Indeed, his eloquence was felt rather than appre-

¹ Stephen, p. 90.

hended. When he sprang from the earth on which he had been kneeling with the persuasion that God had called him to preach, he cried, "Let us go forth in the name of the Lord," and straightway marched forward with his message. "At his first appearance," we are told, "burning eloquence burst from his lips, diseases fled at his touch, sinners abandoned their vice, and crowds flocked into his order." His was the voice of a herald, concerning itself not at all with human opinion, but only with uttering the message of God to man. "If Christianity," it has been truly said, "ceases to be an enthusiasm, it ceases to be a reality."¹ Christianity was a reality to Francis, and therefore it was an enthusiasm. When first he was called to preach before the pope he carefully prepared and committed his sermon, but in the pulpit the elaborate discourse was abandoned; a pause, a mental prayer, a vehement self-conflict followed; and then, surrendering himself to the ardent emotions of the moment, he forced the reluctant pontiff and the college of cardinals to own that it was not Francis who spoke, but God who spoke through him. He dared to penetrate the camp of the Saracens, although a price was set on the head of every Christian. "I am not sent of man," he announced, "but of God to show you the way of salvation." "I will remain," he answered, when invited by the chief to his tent, "if you and your people will become converts for the love of Jesus Christ." Such courage even an infidel could appreciate, and his life was safe. It was the love of Christ which was his theme in Spain, in Southern France, in Northern Italy; thence to lands farther

¹ Mrs. Charles.

afielde he preached it to crowds, and his glowing countenance, his sweet and childlike simplicity, his tender regard for every living creature, never failed to win for him a hearing. When he walked down the narrow street of Assisi showering smiles and passing salutations, people recognized that he was preaching all the while the love of Christ his Lord. The influence of Francis remains still in his order, which, although it soon lost its simplicity and yielded to the temptations of ambition and avarice, has constantly sent forth great preachers ; but Francis himself is greater and more than his order. He is, as a late archbishop of Canterbury said,¹ "such an overpowering person," especially when we understand what awful need the church had of a hero. To Protestant as well as Romanist he is a brother beloved. "I too," confessed Longfellow, "have a favorite saint, St. Francis of Assisi." Ernest Renan coupled his name with that of his Master as the two whom he aspired to comprehend. The keynote of his life was sympathy. It was this note which men caught when they listened to him, and which was credited with converting thousands. The master passion of his life was love. This it was which attracted to him the wretched, the illiterate, the obscure, and first inspired them with a faith in the love of God for them, and then sent them forth to preach that love to all mankind. Sir James Stephen truly says :²

During nearly two centuries Francis and his spiritual descendants chiefly if not exclusively directed the two great engines of the Christian warfare—the Mission and the Pulpit. . . And even when, by the natural descent of corruption it had fallen into well-deserved

¹ Dr. Benson.² "Essays," p. 99.

contumely, still the Mission and the Pulpit, and the tradition of the great men by whom it was originally organized and nurtured, were sufficient to arrest the progress of decay and to redeem for the Franciscan Order a permanent and a conspicuous place among the "principedoms, dominations, powers," which held their appointed rank, and performed their appropriate office in the great spiritual dynasty of Rome.

V. *Anthony of Padua (1198-1231).* The most illustrious of the immediate successors of Francis as preacher and reformer, he whose nature was so akin to his own that Francis called him his "eldest son," was a boy of thirteen when the Franciscan Order was founded. Fernand Martin du Bulhom,¹ born in Lisbon and early destined for the church, was a student in the convent of Santa Cruz, devoted especially to the study of the Bible, when a few Franciscan monks paused at the convent gate to beg for clothes and food. From them he learned that the religious life was one of action as well as of thought. At once his mind was in a ferment of unrest. The cloistered quiet of the library was attractive to him, but the voices of misery and sin seemed to summon him to go forth and work. By and by a second party of Franciscans, this time men sent out to preach the gospel to the Moors in Spain, Portugal, and Morocco, reached the convent. They had already lost one of their number through illness. When they left Santa Cruz on their perilous mission they carried the heart of young Fernand with them. All five fell before the Moslem scimiters, but (so the story runs) their remains were given up for Christian burial, and brought to Santa Cruz. The solemn service held in their honor completed the conquest of

¹ Mrs. Arthur Bell, "Saint Anthony of Padua."

Fernand. "Oh, if only the Most High would deign to anoint me with the sacrifice of his martyrs! Oh, if only as I bend the knee at the name of Jesus I too might offer my head to the blade of the executioner! Fernand, wilt thou see him on that day? and will he come to thee at the blessed moment of release?" Henceforth we know him as "Father Anthony," or from the city of his labors, "Anthony of Padua." His first sermon may have been inspired by his remembrance of that service at Santa Cruz: "Christ became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," was the text. At once his fame as a great preacher was established. His early study of the Scriptures was of vast service to him. "Truly," said Pope Gregory IX., when he had heard him, "this man is the ark of both Testaments, the very storehouse of the holy Scriptures." Combining the two offices that distinguished Francis, Anthony was known as the Friend of the Poor and the Thunder from on High. Padua to-day is rich in memories of his preaching, and his saint's-day brings multitudes year by year to reverence his remains. At Perugia an external pulpit in the wall of the cathedral faces the great market-place, and recalls the days when he preached there to thousands of people.¹ Shops were closed and thoroughfares deserted when he came to any town, and as many as thirty thousand persons would sometimes gather to hear him. His appeals must have been effective, for as he spoke men who came to attack him dropped the dagger and sought his embrace. Women cast off their ornaments and sold them for the benefit of the poor, and old and hardened sinners were

¹ Neale, p. 219.

brought to immediate confession. Notes of his sermons still remain, and one prayer which he was wont to offer before preaching. His method was more analytical than that of many evangelists, and he often kept very close to the words of his text in the division of his subject. He had a quick and fertile imagination, not always held in check by his judgment, and he was apt to spiritualize the incidents of Scripture in a manner more ingenious than profitable.¹ "Note," he said, "that the hedgehog is full of prickles and if any one tries to take it it rolls itself up and becomes a ball in his hands. So with a sinner; if you try to convince him of sin, he immediately rolls himself up and hides by excusing his faults." His power, as that of many another preacher, must have been more in the man than in his words. Francis himself was not more faithful in exposing and rebuking sin. A miser died and Anthony was called upon to preach his funeral sermon. He bids his hearers know that the dead man's heart is not in his breast. It is in the coffer which holds his money and his bonds. The legend-mongers will have us believe that an instant examination was made; the heart had indeed been torn from its place, it was buried in the chest. We can readily see how the story grew out of his powerful application of the words, "Where your treasure is there will your heart be also."

Anthony is commemorated to-day in the noble basilica at Padua, which was erected in his name. According to the tradition, when the church was completed in 1286, and the body of the great preacher was carried into it, it was found that while the flesh was reduced to

¹ Broadus, "History of Preaching," p. 103.

dust and the skeleton had fallen to pieces, the tongue still remained undecayed.¹ "O blessed tongue," cried Cardinal Bonaventura, "which in life didst ever bless the Lord, and lead others to bless him, now does it clearly appear in what high esteem thou wast held by God himself."

VI. Bonaventura (1201-1274). This Cardinal Bonaventura was himself a preacher of eminence. The sermons which remain to us show considerable skill in the analysis of his subject, but the choice of texts is fanciful rather than scholarly: "To-morrow by the time the sun is hot, ye shall have deliverance,"² is the text of a Christmas eve sermon, which he introduces by rendering "deliverance" as "salvation," and interpreting the sun to be Christ, and its heat his love. Bonaventura is chiefly remembered, however, as the Seraphic Doctor, the theologian of the Franciscans, as Thomas Aquinas was of the Dominicans.

VII. Bernardino of Siena (1380-1444). Nearer akin to Anthony of Padua, but born almost two centuries later than he, was Bernardino of Siena, the fair Italian city which also embalms the memory of the saintly Catherine.³ In Bernardino's devotion to the miserable and afflicted he must have resembled her. During the great plague of 1400 he refused to leave the city, and labored without respite among its stricken victims. His sermons seem to us forced and fanciful, but we must judge them by their results. The vices which cursed Europe were the subjects of his fearless denunciations. In many a city he raised the cross of Christ in square

¹ Bell, p. 147.

² 1 Sam. 11:9.

³ See Mrs. Butler's "Life of Catherine of Siena."

and market-place, and filled with the ardor of a soul which took home to itself every insult to his crucified Lord, preached against the profanity, so fearfully common then, which took the Holy Name in vain. Gambling and profligacy were exposed and held up to execration. With the vigor of a John the Baptist he called for their instant abandonment. At Bologna, and no doubt at many other places, when he had finished speaking, dice-boxes and obscene books were brought out and thrown into a big fire in the center of the square. After preaching on one occasion in Florence, the listeners erected in the great open space before the church of Santa Croce a monument on which was inscribed only the name of Jesus. Other lands than Italy, we may presume, had also their popular preachers who, before the Protestant Reformation, shook Europe and called the people to repentance and faith.

VIII. Berthold (*d. 1272*). To the Franciscans belonged Berthold of Regensburg, who anticipated Luther in scathing the sellers of indulgences. "Penny preachers," he called them, "who discourse so freely before the people concerning God, in order that they may strip them of their money. Fie on thee! penny preacher, murderer of the whole world!"¹ No church could hold the crowds that came to hear Berthold. In the open fields, from an impromptu pulpit, he would preach to an assembly of sixty thousand people.² He was to Germany what Anthony and Bernardino were to Italy. Often in his words we catch the trumpet notes of Luther himself. There was indeed much superstition yet to be got rid of, but his message never failed to bring Christ to

¹ James, p. 150.

² Neander.

the multitudes. The sermons of Berthold preached in the Teutonic dialect of the thirteenth century still await an English translation. How worthy of it many of them are may be inferred from these words, taken from his discourse on Christ's promise to his disciples :¹

“ My peace I give unto you.” Now that you may the more highly esteem the offer, I will tell you what it is—it is called Peace. Peace is a thing that all the world craves, and nothing so much as peace. All that man craves and does he does for nothing else than for the sake of peace. Perchance there is a thing in me called hunger, then I eat that I may make peace with hunger, and so with thirst, with cold, with sleep, with weariness, with poverty. Thus, all the world craves nothing so much as peace. And when Almighty God came to earth, he did so for nothing else than for the sake of peace, that he might make peace between us and the Father in heaven. Then sang the angels over the manger, “ Glory to God on high, and to all those who are of good will, good peace on earth.” And when our Lord walked here on earth, and when he rose from the dead, and when he went up to heaven, he said to the disciples, “ Peace be with you.”

Berthold was, we may say, a popular mystic.² Clearer in form and in presentation than most of the mystics of his era, he was, nevertheless, in sympathy with their spirit and doctrine.

IX. Eckart (1260-1327); Tauler (1290-1361). The great preacher of that school was Tauler, but he owed much to Meister Eckart, at whose feet he had sat and whom he called “ the holy teacher.” Eckart was a Dominican trained in the school of Thomas Aquinas. Tauler was born in Strasburg while the cathedral, that

¹ John 14 : 27. Translated by Prof. E. C. Dargan, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. See Bemall, “ Life of Bernardino Ochino,” p. 36.

² Ker, p. 127.

Immense
And glorious work of fine intelligence,

was rising. Himself influenced by Nicholas von Basel, a Waldensian, one of that long line of heroes who, in the Alpine mountains cold, held the faith and often sealed it with their blood, in his turn Tauler affected Martin Luther. "Read the sermons of John Tauler," said Luther.¹ "I know that I have found more pure doctrine therein than I have found or than can be found in all the books of the scholastics at all the universities. Since the time of the apostles scarcely any writer like him has been born." It was characteristic of the two men that Luther laid his stress upon Christ for us, Tauler on Christ in us. But both alike delighted in setting forth to the people the all-sufficiency of their Lord and the two together make the complete presentation of him. "Since this human nature," says Tauler,² in an Advent sermon, "has been assumed by the eternal Son of God, the believing man is a child and son of God, with Christ the eternal Son of the Father." A faith so spiritual would naturally lead him to add, "Prayer is nothing but the giving of the heart to God. Where we should pray the Lord himself teaches when he says 'in spirit.' No one should imagine that that is a true prayer when one mumbles many outward words and runs over many psalms."

X. Thomas à Kempis (1381-1471). One with the mystics in spirit, although far removed from them by cir-

¹ Jacob's "Life of Martin Luther," p. 45.

² See Tauler's "Sermons," translated by Miss Winkworth. Robert A. Vaughan, "Hours with the Mystics." H. Francis Bevan, "Three Friends of God."

cumstances, was Thomas à Kempis, the reputed author of "The Imitation of Christ," the book which is still said to circulate more largely than any other that is published, the Bible only excepted. For seventy years he lived his tranquil life, a member of the "Brotherhood of the Common Life," at one time a great preaching order. Although his sermons seem to be tiresome and prolix (and, indeed, he frequently preached two sermons in the same day of three hours' length), yet to him belongs the honor of preaching the first sermon in Dutch at Amsterdam, to the great indignation of the wealthy canons. His modest and diffident nature shrank from open conflict with the unpreaching prelates, as Latimer afterward called them, and for a time he was silent, until the crowds which flocked after him emboldened him to open his mouth once more, and the conversion of many notorious sinners proved that his word was with power. To the end of his life he remained a deacon, refusing to enter the priesthood. "Not for all the gold of Arabia," said he, "would I have the care of souls for a single night."

XI. John Wycliffe (1324-1384). Across the British Channel, meanwhile, a voice more fearless than his had anticipated the coming revival of religion, and more than any other one thing hastened its approach. With John Wycliffe, the day-star of the Reformation, we are now concerned only as a preacher. His preaching and his translations of the Bible have this feature in common—each of them was a distinct effort to bring home to the people in their own tongue the word of God. Sermons of the period were chiefly in Latin, their Bible (which the preachers quoted, often abundantly)

was the Vulgate.¹ The knowledge of the truth "was the knowledge of the priest who preached, not of the people who listened." "Preaching in the Middle Ages was not a lost art or a forgotten practice. But the neglect of preaching was often very real, and the friars who took up the work at first with such success had long since fallen into looser ways." The Dominicans were the fathers of the Inquisition and foremost in persecuting. They held up the cross in one hand, and piled on the fagots with the other. Their lives were corrupt and lazy, and such popularity as they enjoyed was won at the expense of reverence and often of delicacy itself.

In England the freeborn spirit of the people represented² foreign spiritual supremacy, and the nobles, a century before Luther, were many of them inclined to the evangelical faith. It was they who pleaded for a Bible in the vernacular. "We will not," said the Duke of Lancaster, "be the refuse of all other nations; for since they have God's Law in their own language we will have ours in English whosoever say nay!" This ringing utterance may have been in Macaulay's mind when he wrote of Chaucer and Wycliffe: "The age of the warrior was the age of the great cathedrals, the age of the first great English poet, of the first great English preacher. In so splendid and imperial a manner did the English nation take place among the nations of the world."³

Wycliffe's history falls into four divisions, his uni-

¹ See Trevelyan, "England in the Age of Wycliffe." W. W. Capes, "History of the English Church in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries," p. 130.

² Lechler, "Life of Wycliffe," p. 142.

³ "History of England," Chap. I.

versity life, when he gained distinction as a scholar; his public life, when he won the ear of the nobles of England; his life as a parish minister, when he preached and worked among the country people; and his life as a Bible translator, which closed only with his death.

1. He was himself a most powerful preacher, "a very English Savonarola."¹ His extant sermons divide themselves into two great groups, the one Latin and the other English. In the English sermons he adopted a plain and popular and even a drastic style of speaking. "On the week days," says Thomas Fuller,² "in the schools, he proved to the learned what he meant to preach; and on the Lord's day he preached in the pulpit to the vulgar what he had proved before; not unlike those builders in the second temple, holding a sword in one hand and a trowel in the other, his disputing making his preaching to be strong, and his preaching making his disputation to be plain."

2. To the whole subject of preaching he devoted much thought. How highly he esteemed it we learn from his own words:³ "True men say boldly that true preaching is better than praying by mouth, yea, though it come of heart and clean devotion; and it edifieth more the people, and therefore Christ commanded specially his apostles and disciples to preach the gospel, and not to close them in cloisters, nor churches, nor stones, to pray thus. And therefore Isaiah said, 'Woe is me for I was still,' and Paul saith, 'Woe is to me if I preach not the gospel.'" Preaching, he says, has to

¹ Prof. Goldwin Smith.

² Thomas Fuller, "Church History of Britain," Book IV., Section 5.

³ Dr. Vaughan, "Wycliffe," pp. 293, 456.

be "apt, apparent, full of true feeling, fearless in rebuking sins, and so addressed to the heart as to enlighten the spirit and subdue the will."¹

3. Putting his theory into practice, he instituted a company of preachers; at first men in orders, by and by, as the demand for their services increased, plain laymen. These he sent out to preach, and for their guidance he drew up the directions to which we have just referred. "Poor Preachers" they were called, alluding to the unrecorded vow of poverty which was upon them; "Simple Priests," emphasizing the plainness of their life and speech. "One simple man," said Wycliffe, "if the grace of Christ be in him, is more profitable to the church than many graduates, since he sows Christ's law humbly and abundantly by work as well as by word." These men were loyal to the Scriptures,² from which they quoted constantly, and it was largely due to them and to their leader that England was prepared for that reform in manners and in doctrine which became the possession of the people only when the Bible touched the heart of the northern races. These "poor priests, these sturdy free-spoken and popular Methodists of the fourteenth century, are here, traveling before us from country to country, from town to town, and village to village, barefooted, staff in hand, the visible personation of the toilsome, the generous, the noble-hearted."³ The appeal to the common heart of England was not in vain. Knights and squires with their good swords drawn would often stand around them as they preached. Peasants and

¹ Lechler, Vol. I., Chap. 6.

² Trevelyan, p. 129.

³ Vaughan's "Wycliffe," p. 277.

tradesmen listened to the truth from their lips, and yielded to its sway. "The soul under that coarse garb, and which plays from beneath that weather-worn countenance, is an emancipated soul, not so much the image of the age in which we find it, as the property of an age to come—to come only after a long, a dark, and a troubled interval shall have passed away."¹

XII. John Huss (1369-1415). The echoes of Wycliffe's words sounded over the sea. John Huss took up the gauntlet while he was yet at the University of Prague and defended the great reformer's doctrines. Faithfully preaching the truth, he was excommunicated, and finally betrayed. At the stake, outside the city of Constance, he declared: "God is my witness that I have never taught or preached that which false witnesses have testified against me. He knows that the great object of all my preaching and writing was to convert men from sin." So "the pale thin man in mean attire" closed a life of trial and suffering, and went home in the fiery chariot to the victor's robe and crown.

XIII. Jerome of Prague (1375-1415). Not long after, on the same spot, his friend and follower Jerome of Prague died also at the stake, regretting only that in a moment of weakness he had been tempted to recant and not "stand up bravely to protest against the iniquitous sentence given against Wycliffe, and against the holy man John Huss, my master and friend." A big boulder at the place of their martyrdom inscribed with their names is to-day the monument of these stalwart reformers before the Reformation.

We stand now on the threshold of the Protestant

¹ Vaughan, p. 279.

Reformation. As the day breaks we look back into the night which is passing, and review the sermons of that long and troubled period. 1. The ready-made homilies from Charlemagne downward come first and perhaps linger latest, "*Gesta Romanorum*," "Light of the Soul," "Sleep at Ease," in Latin all, and often fantastic and allegorical enough.¹ 2. The schoolmen's sermons follow, remorselessly pursuing the belief in the plenary and verbal inspiration of the whole Bible to its logical results, the childish worship of the letter, to the neglect of the spirit. What unworthy plays on words! "Jesus," the text for a sermon of this kind as Erasmus heard it, a word literally full of wonders, and "declined in three cases, Jesus, Jesum, Jesu, wherein we have manifestly an image of the Trinity."² What willful abuse of passages of Scripture; taking for a text on the feast of St. Lawrence who was martyred on a gridiron, "His bedstead was a bedstead of iron," or "They gave him a piece of a broiled fish." 3. Then, almost inevitably upon this solemn trifling, comes the anecdotal sermon; Vieyra telling his hearers how he saw Portuguese sailors playing dice in an inn at Dover to the tune of the landlord, "If the magistrate know of it I shall be a lost man"; strings of ridiculous fables and stories turning on broad jests; legends of saints as absurd as impossible; sudden touches of sensational discourse, as when the Spanish bishop waked up his dozing congregation, by beginning, "I say that in the One God are three Powers!"³ and when archbishops and prelates and officers of the Inquisition pricked up

¹ Seeböhm, "Oxford Reformers." ² Ker, p. 143.

³ Hagenbach, "History of the Reformation," Vol. I., pp. 39, 40.

their ears for heresy, added, "Thus, my brothers, spake the Arian"; and shameless fooling in broad burlesque, as when one preacher crowed like a cock, or another imitated the cuckoo, and a third, perhaps to the manner born, hissed like a goose.

4. Such excesses must have made serious men welcome the evangelical sermon, wherever they could hear it. Often, no doubt, it was mystical in its use of Scripture. The plain and literal Bible sense was still to many only, as Hugo of Victor affirmed, simply the clay used to anoint the eyes of the blind.¹ Jesus standing on the shore is interpreted to mean the resurrection at last on the shore of heaven, the final rest. At other times the sermon would be homely enough: "It is a common saying," Peter of Blois declares to his hearers, "'Love me, love my dog'; and would that we were dogs and then we should lick the sores of our sin; or at least whelps, and then we should eat of the crumbs which fell from our Master's table." But underneath the figurative distortions, and the quaint imagery, the heart of the gospel could be heard to beat. The Bible might be misinterpreted, but it was the staple of an increasing number of sermons. The power of the Waldensians had always centered in their use of the Scriptures. In the twelfth century lay associations for the study of the Bible were formed in Provence and Alsace, despite the opposition of the ecclesiastics. Preaching in Scotland was long hindered for lack of a translation of the Scriptures into the dialect of the country. It was Wycliffe's version which gave England the precedence of her northern neighbors by so

¹ James, p. 147.

many years. With the invention of printing, the revival of interest in the word of God kept pace with a revived delight in the preaching of the truth gathered from its pages. The Renaissance brought to the scholars the Bible to be read and studied in the original, "and the laws of hermeneutics and exegesis were applied to it with unprecedented accuracy." The sermon was bound to renew its youth as the age passed up out of the shadows into the light.

Meanwhile, we do well to remember that there had never failed men who even in the darkest hour might have sat for Chaucer's portrait of the poor parson :¹

A good man there was of religion
That was a poor parson of a town,
But rich he was of holy thought and work ;
He was also a learned man, a clerk
That Christe's gospel woulde preach.
But Christe's lore, and his apostles twelve
He taught, but first he followed it himself.

¹ Prologue, "Canterbury Tales."

VII

REFORMATION PREACHERS

THE close of the Middle Ages was marked by two features which powerfully affected preaching. Of these the first was the passing of the feudal system, the second the rise of the Renaissance. Neither of these two was a sudden movement; and it is not easy, nor indeed is it needful, to find an exact date for the one or the other. When the safeguards of the Roman Empire were removed from Europe a system of self-defense for separate parts of the country became necessary. The lord, the knight, and often the higher ecclesiastic became a feudal lord. "The State was forgotten, the neighborhood became paramount, and the strongest was the national chief."¹ Each castle, as Voltaire says, became the capital of a small kingdom of brigands, in the midst of desolate towns and depopulated fields. Gradually order grew out of this confusion, but it was an order which was at the mercy of the local lord, and in other parts of Europe even more than in England the lord was supreme.² Oftener than not he was closely associated with the local ecclesiastical dignitary. Not infrequently he himself was that dignitary. The demand for preaching had all along come from the people rather than from the church. Even Dominic and Francis were reluctantly recognized by the pope; Wycliffe he would willingly have burnt.

¹ Storrs, "St. Bernard," p. 39.

² Moeller, Vol. II., p. 540.

Founded although it was at first in self-defense the feudal system had not been favorable to preaching. Little reverence was paid to the church building.¹ Nobles would fly their falcons in the roof during service; merchants would buy and sell; the magistrates would sit to administer justice. At certain festivals the church would be turned into a playhouse, and the sacred mysteries would be caricatured. The altar became for a time a banqueting table, and orgies were carried on more atrocious than those of the heathen.

The fall of Constantinople, A. D. 1453, whose now dishonored basilica had once resounded with the preaching of Chrysostom, materially helped the Renaissance, but it was not the cause of it. Italy was enriched with the spoils of the dismantled capital of the Eastern church, and many a scholar set his face toward Venice, Florence, or Rome who but for the breaking up of his old home would have spent the remnant of his life in the city of his youth. But the Renaissance, quickening in the heart of Europe a "keener sense of literary grace and classical refinement, and a broader human interest,"² was the result of not one influence only but of many. The founding of the great universities, the invention of printing, the growing sense of personal right and responsibility, all did much to rouse the world from its ignorance and apathy. Now, thanks to the printing press, the literature of Greece and Rome and the writings of the Christian fathers lay within the reach of every intelligent student. The church could no longer hold an exclusive possession of the fountains of learning. At Oxford grave doctors preached against

¹ Hagenbach, "Reformation," Vol. I., p. 39. ² Smeaton, "The Medici."

the study of Greek as "devilish and damnable." But at the bidding of Erasmus, whose Latin, unlike theirs, was as polished as Cicero's, Greek returned from her long banishment with the New Testament in her hand. He never tired of inveighing against the intellectual density of the monks. The Reformation, as he viewed it, was the tragedy due to their hatred of literature. In Canterbury Cathedral he saw the pilgrims groveling before the jeweled shoe of Thomas à Becket, and pointing to the degrading spectacle, said, "We kiss the old shoes and dirty handkerchiefs of the saints; and we neglect their books, which are the most holy and valuable relics. We lock up their shirts and clothes in cabinets adorned with gems, but leave their writings to mouldiness and vermin."¹

It was not that the Bible had been a closed book before the Reformation. On the contrary, the sermons of the medieval preachers are full of scriptural allusions and quotations.² The "*Aurea Biblia*," a book of biblical quotations, was extensively used in the preparation of sermons; and it was only one of several such handbooks.³ But it was that Erasmus claimed that the scholar should study the New Testament in the original, and that Wycliffe and Tyndal worked to put into the hands of the people a Bible in their own tongue.

This was what the Renaissance brought to the pulpit. The right of private judgment, which men regained as the Dark Ages passed away, made the Bible in the vernacular inexpressibly dear to them; and the

¹ Hannay, "Satire and Satirists," pp. 73, 79. ² Capes, p. 256.

³ "Life of Bernardino Ochino," p. 36.

recognition of the Bible as literature, which resulted from the labor of Erasmus, gave it a new value in the eyes of the student.

At first, indeed, the revived interest in classical studies was not altogether favorable to the pulpit. The preaching orders, Dominicans, Franciscans, and others, had lost their early simplicity and purity.¹ Abandoning themselves to the pleasures of the table, the monks would too often send ignorant persons in their stead to preach fables and legends, to amuse and plunder the people. So the message of the preacher had become a byword and a reproach because of the corruption or incapacity of the messenger. And when the Renaissance touched the pulpit, its tendency at first was to put on it a classical varnish. Preachers, says Tyndal, will prove a point of the faith as well out of a fable of Ovid, or any other poet, as out of St. John's Gospel or Paul's Epistles.² Cornelius Musso, a bishop who affected the speech of the Renaissance, describes our Lord as "dying like Hercules, rising like Apollo or Esculapius, ascending to heaven as a true Bellerophon, a second Perseus, who had slain the Medusa that changed men into stones."³ This, however, was only a passing fashion, and it was in the land most powerfully influenced by the quickened intellectual life that the first preacher of the new period was heard.

I. Savonarola (1452-1498). It was this revival of pagan learning coupled with a revival of pagan morals which determined young Savonarola, a native of Ferrara, who had intended to study for the medical pro-

¹ D'Aubigné, "Reformation," Vol. V., p. 83.

² Cf. Seebohm, "Oxford Reformers." ³ Hoppin, p. 145.

fession, to devote himself to the priesthood.¹ If his acquaintance with the world outside the convent changed him from a physician to a priest, his acquaintance with the life within the walls changed him from a priest to a reformer. His message, as it gradually revealed itself to him, was that the church would be scourged for its sins, that it would afterward be regenerated, and that all this would come to pass soon. The priest became a prophet, and a prophet who saw in himself, under the hand of God, the scourge, the regenerator, the harbinger of the new and happy era. At Florence, 1482, his earliest attempt at preaching was a failure. A voice hard and unmusical, gestures violent and uncouth, gave little promise of the coming orator. He retired to pray and study. Six years later he appeared in Brescia, and the prophetic tone in which there was no note of doubt, caught the ear of the people at once. Lorenzo de Medici (d. 1492), head of the ruling family in Florence, recalled him to the city. In the church of St. Mark he expounded and applied the Apocalypse of St. John. Soon no church could hold the crowds that gathered to listen to him. All around the interior of the Duomo a temporary amphitheatre of benches and steps was raised, and to the immense and excited throng Savonarola exposed the corruption of city and church. He spared not prince or priest, citizen or peasant. The literary class, specially patronized by the Medici family, found no mercy at his hands. Their scornful indifference was criminal, their sneering skepticism a precursor of a terrible awakening to wrath. Numbers of young nobles yielded to the fiery orator, and an Order which

¹ Cf. G. H. McHardy, "Savonarola."

should perpetuate the reaction from the æsthetic to the ascetic life was formed. The reaction came before long. Florence first made a bonfire of its articles of luxury and frivolity, and then cried out for its burnt vanities. The city of flowers tired of funeral wreaths. The banished Medici were recalled. Savonarola's reversion to the Hebrew theocracy under the blue sky of Italy was followed by a violent revulsion. A theocracy which waved away from the table any dish dear to the palates of the pleasure-loving and the taste of the refined, which struck a blow at the pride and prosperity of the proudest and most prosperous city of the time, could not be tolerated long. Savonarola challenged his opponents to the ordeal of fire, and himself failed to appear when the hour of trial struck. His influence was shattered. His failure as a preacher at the first had been remedied; but nothing could atone for the hesitation of the prophet at the last. What men could not forgive, God could. To Savonarola was granted the endurance which did not flinch under the rack, and the splendid courage with which at the gallows and the stake he atoned for one hour of cowardice and fear.¹

Savonarola excelled in just the popular gifts which such a speaker needs. He laid hold at once on the imagination, the emotions, and the will. What he made others feel he first of all felt himself. When to a vast crowd that had been waiting in the church since morning he preached from the text, "I will bring a flood of waters upon the whole earth," he says that he himself was as much agitated as any of his hearers; and one of them declares that a cold shiver ran through him and

¹ Cf. George Eliot's "Romola."

his hair stood on end, as like a peal of thunder the preacher's voice shook the place. The power which mastered him was itself not unlike that under which the old prophets moved and spoke. It was in fact a condition of ecstasy,

and when it took possession of him in the pulpit, in the presence of the whole people, there were no bounds to his exaltation ; it exceeded all that words can describe ; he became as it were the master of all his hearers and carried them along with him in the same degree of excitement. Men and women of all ages and conditions—artisans, poets, philosophers—sobbed aloud, so that the walls of the church echoed their wailings. The reporter who was taking down the words of the preacher, having had to stop, wrote : "At this place I was so overcome by weeping that I could not go on." Savonarola himself had to sit down from exhaustion ; sometimes he was so much affected as to cause an illness that confined him to his bed for several days. His written sermons cannot convey any adequate idea of the eloquence of those moments ; many of the words must have been missed in a report, and what remained can have none of the ardor with which they were uttered. We can the more readily believe in the high state of exaltation of the orator, in his extraordinary vehemence, and in what may be called the eloquence of his person and gestures, because the little that remains of the words which fell from his lips in those solemn moments hardly accounts for the great effect his discourses produced on the Florentine public, at that time the most cultivated in Europe.

He was no pulpit demagogue. His great intellectual ability was recognized in his early days as a student and teacher in the Dominican convent at Bologna. To the study and exposition of the Scriptures he brought, when he entered the pulpit of San Marco or the Duomo, mind as well as heart. He preached civic righteousness, but he did it from Micah and other prophetical

books ; he preached current politics, but the Chronicles and the Psalms furnished him with apposite texts ; he preached coming judgment, but it was from the book of Revelation that he unfolded his message of wrath. His Bible, which is now preserved in the Public Library of Florence, is one of the treasures of the pulpit. It is filled with marginal notes written in a minute hand, and these notes are thickest in the books to which he instinctively turned for the parallels he drew between the world of old Israel and the world which was surging about him as he spoke.

In the crowd daily pressing to hear the wonderful preacher was a young Englishman, John Colet (b. 1466), who catching, one thinks, from Savonarola the fervor for the Scriptures, went back to his native country, and became the first and most eminent expounder of the Bible in the University of Oxford.¹ Colet threw aside as utterly as did Savonarola the method of the doctors of the church, who divided the Scriptures into four senses, the literal, the tropological, the allegorical, and the anagogical ; after which each one of them went on to expound the text in his own willful way ; but equally he rose superior to Savonarola who was so intensely absorbed in the Florentine foreground that he read the Bible through its very atmosphere of stress and struggle, and saw the original text contorted as an object viewed through the flames of a conflagration.

Savonarola's subjects were limited. He preached, not the whole round of Scripture truth but only such truth as was needed by his own interpretation of the hour in which he lived. The times controlled the

¹ Cf. Seeböhm, pp. 10, 17.

book, not the book the times. Without doubt he had immense ethical fearlessness. He defied the tyranny of the Medicis, and dared to say: "I shall remain and Lorenzo the Magnificent will perish." He set himself against the revival of semi-paganism in art, philosophy and literature; and he did not oppose that revival in vain. His defeat was only temporary, for he was marching with the Reformation, in the van of the host that before long was to shake the continent. But in his preaching there was a lack of balance; it was excited, passionate, extravagant. It appealed more than it instructed. Savonarola was the victim of his own temperament, which in the end mastered him; and of his own times, which first idolized and then burned him.

In his enthusiasm for righteousness Savonarola was in the line of succession from the old Hebrew prophets. In his love for his kind he trod closely in the footsteps of his Lord. His loyalty to Christ put him in the forefront of the reformers. But he was no representative of either his city or his land. He was apart, a voice as of John the Baptist, crying in the wilderness. The leader of the Reformation must be a man the product of his own times and of his own country, with qualities which would make him a citizen of the world, and in the wide sense not for an age but for all time.

II. Martin Luther (1483-1546). Such a man was Martin Luther. The Renaissance and the new learning had reached Germany. The impulse to throw off the tyranny of the ecclesiastical yoke was already powerful there. The struggle between Hildebrand and the Emperor Henry, four hundred years earlier, had

borne its fruit. A free-spoken people would not any longer keep silent in the face of abuses which affected their homes and their commerce, as well as their faith and their freedom to think and to believe. In responding to the voice of Luther Germany answered its own call. He was a German of the Germans.

I. We are concerned with him as a preacher. His natural advantages were very great. He possessed to a rare degree that fullness of being which is of such immense service to the preacher. Doctor Dale says of him :¹

He had a fiery and passionate hatred of falsehood and of sin ; a dauntless courage in the assertion of the claims of truth and righteousness. He had a boundless faith and a boundless joy in God. His joy was of a masculine kind, and made him stronger for his work. His faith was of a masculine kind, and relieved him from worrying doubts and fears about his soul's affairs. He had his gloomy times, his conflicts with principalities and powers in dismal and solitary places ; but he had no morbid dreams about the sanctity of misery, nor did he suppose that the ever-blessed God finds any satisfaction in the self-inflicted sufferings of his children. His massive face and robust form were the outward and visible signs of the vigor and massiveness of his moral and religious character. He was a man, and did not try to be anything else. God made him a man ; what was he that he should quarrel with God's work ? He had flesh and blood ; he could not help it. He did not desire to help it. He ate heartily, and enjoyed seeing his friends at dinner. He married a wife and loved her ; and he loved God none the less. He liked music and songs as well as preaching and sermons. He could laugh as well as preach. He had a genial humor as well as deep devoutness. He was a brave man, strong and resolute, with abounding life of all kinds ; a saint of a type with which for many evil centuries Christendom had been unfamiliar.

¹ R. W. Dale, "Laws for Common Life."

The conflict which we saw in Savonarola between conflicting impulses in his nature we do not see in Luther. He was a whole man, as Novalis puts it, "an absolute man; in him soul and body were not divided." "It was," said Emerson, "the union of a broad humanity, common sense, and warm social affections, with the extraordinary intensity of his convictions, that saved Luther from the extravagancies of fanaticism."¹ For the great work of the Protestant Reformation which was to be served with voice and pen, a man of this calibre rather than a scholarly recluse was needed. "Erasmus laid the egg," so ran the current saying, "but Luther hatched it."

His love for humanity was an element in his popular power. In his fine hearty way he has hope for all mankind. Of Cicero he can say, "I trust God will be merciful to him." "His greatness of soul and his marvelous many-sidedness, made him the man of his time and the man of his people."² There are no people in whom the one heart common to us all beats with greater fullness than it beats in the Germans, and Von Bauer says truly, "Every one in whose veins German blood flows must recognize in Luther a German man in whom, as in no other, the German character was exhibited in its purest and noblest features. His intense nationality taught him how to hold the mind and spirit of the Germans in hand as a musician holds his lyre."³

Not less strong were his social affections. His own life was very simple, and yet it was rich in love. He was no longer young when he married, but though his

¹ Emerson's "Life," Vol. I., p. 232.

² Doctor Döllinger.

³ Ferd. Christian Bauer, "Church History."

humor sometimes plays about her little failings, his Kate was inexpressibly dear to him. The loss of his little daughter Magdalene was the heaviest sorrow of his life: "My dear little daughter," he said as they parted, "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Music was to him, as to so many of his race, "the grandest and sweetest gift of God." In the university garden, in Wittenberg, they still lead you to the seat where he and his wife would give to the winds their fears with lute and song. "Except theology," said he, "there is no art which can be placed in comparison with music."

That garden was to him a perpetual joy. "If a man could make a single rose, we should give him an empire; yet roses and flowers no less beautiful are scattered in profusion over the world, and no one regards them." Not Francis of Assisi himself could have talked more winsomely to the birds than did Luther. There were two which had nested in his garden, and when one of them was frightened at his appearance he said, "Ah, you dear little bird, do not fly away, I am heartily well disposed towards you, would you only believe it. In like manner have we no trust in God, who has always shown us every kindness. He who has given his Son for us will not strike us dead." This devout frame of mind, which saw God in everything was natural to him. "There go our preachers," he exclaimed as he watched the cattle in the field, "the bearers of milk, of butter, of cheese, and of wool, who daily preach faith in God and tell us to put our trust in him, as our Father who cares for us and nourishes us."

2. To this happy temperament were added such gifts as a speaker of the first order would need. When

he preached his earliest sermon at Wittenberg some one who heard him said, "This monk is a marvelous fellow. He has strange eyes, and will give the doctors trouble by and by." His choice of words was fresh and natural; he had at command fancy, imagination, irony, sarcasm. The anecdote was always ready, the allegory revealed its hidden meaning as he used it, and he was a master of the plain speech needed for popular exposition.

That he treated religion not in poor dog Latin but in the rich vernacular was a main source of his strength. His homely style "is strong, masculine, and clear, and tells us just what we want to know. One never doubts his meaning for an instant." His words, the people declared to be "half battles"; and Melanchthon touched the source of this effectiveness when he said, "Luther's words were born not on his lips but in his soul."¹

To keep rhetoric subordinate to the great purposes served by preaching was his constant aim. He had no praise for the preachers who aimed at "sublimity, difficulty, eloquence; and neglecting the souls of the poor, sought their own praise and honor, and to please one or two persons of consequence." Yet to this hour Luther remains a great literary power in the country of his birth. "In mother wit, in elasticity, and in force and imaginative power he was as able a man as ever lived. Luther created the German language as an instrument of literature. His translation of the Bible is as rich and grand as our own, and his table talk as full of matter as Shakespeare's plays."²

¹ Prof. Adam Sedgwick, "Life," Vol. II., p. 112.

² J. A. Froude, "Shorter Studies," Vol. I., p. 112.

3. Higher far than these natural gifts must be placed his spiritual power. He spoke under the controlling influence of the gospel of Christ. When he went to meet the pope's legate at Augsburg his fellow-citizens saw him through the gates of Wittenberg and far along the road. He was still in his monk's brown frock and went afoot. "Luther forever!" they cried. "Nay," he answered, "Christ forever!" "All the wisdom of the world," he himself says, "is childish foolishness compared with the acknowledgment of Christ." He was emphatically a man of prayer. "When you are about to preach," he says, "speak with God, 'Dear Lord God, I will preach to thy honor and speak of thee. Thee will I adore, and praise thy name, although I cannot do it as well as I could wish to do.'" From the heart he spoke to the heart. "I did not learn my theology all at once. I was constrained by my perplexities to search deeper and deeper. The Scriptures cannot be understood except through perplexities and temptations."

His love for the Scriptures made Luther a great biblical preacher. He started while a young professor to lecture at Wittenberg on the Psalms.¹ It filled him with shame and sorrow that as he grew up he had never heard either Gospel or Psalm properly explained. He was hungry for the Scriptures himself, as one who has been long deprived of necessary food. Three months of incessant and enthusiastic labor was all the time he took for his marvelous translation of the New Testament. Europe was waking up to the value of the treasure which had so long been neglected; the poor

¹ Jacobs, "Life of Luther," p. 19.

monk leads the host of scholars in the search, while he stands without a peer in his familiarity with the spiritual meaning of the word of God. When no pulpit was open to him he conducted a service in his own house every Sunday, in which he expounded the gospel for the day; and so the famous "House Postils" were born.¹ From the hour when in the library of the monastery of Erfurt he discovered the Bible, his faith in its power grew. "It is the word which has consumed the papacy; and no emperor or prince could have done this."

4. The careful study of the art of preaching which Luther made enriches us with many valuable hints. "Oh, how I trembled when I was ascending the pulpit for the first time! I would fain have excused myself; but they made me preach."² It was at Wittenberg in an unfinished building and from a pulpit constructed of rough boards that he preached. "Here," he said in after years, "under this very pear tree I have over and over again argued with Staupitz (his Vicar General) as to whether it was my vocation to preach. 'Doctor,' I used to say, 'you want to kill me. I shall not live three months, if you compel me to go on.' 'Our Lord,' the doctor would reply, 'required the aid of able men; he needs your services and must have them.'" The nervous trepidation ceased after a while, and by and by he was able to give such counsels as these :

When a man comes into the pulpit for the first time, he is much perplexed by the number of heads before him. When I ascend the pulpit I see no heads, but imagine those that are before me to be all blocks. When I preach I sink myself deeply down; I re-

¹ Jacobs, p. 309.

² *Ibid.*, p. 49.

gard neither doctors nor masters, of which there are in the church above forty. But I have an eye to the multitude of young people, children, and servants, of which there are more than two thousand. I preach to them. I direct my discourse to those that have need of it. A preacher should be a logician and a rhetorician—that is, he must be able to teach and admonish. When he preaches on any article, he must first distinguish it, then define, describe, and show what it is ; thirdly, he must produce sentences from the Scripture to prove and to strengthen it ; fourthly, he must explain it by examples ; fifthly, he must adorn it with similitudes ; and, lastly, he must admonish and arouse the indolent, correct the disobedient, and reprove the authors of false doctrine.

He is severe on the preacher who torments his hearers with long sermons.¹ He invokes a curse on him who seeking only his own honor deals with subtle matters and does not let himself down to the simplest of his hearers. If the more refined and exacting of the congregation do not wish to listen—"the door stands open." One of the wisest and least-heeded of his counsels to the preacher, is that he know when to stop.

5. The gifts and graces which made Luther so great a preacher can be studied by us in his occasional words, in his free and outspoken "Table Talk," and in his published sermons and expositions. His fearless plainness of speech survives in a hundred of his utterances. "The fine discernment of Erasmus, and the gentleness of Melanchthon," as Heinrich Heine says, "had never done so much for us as the divine brutality of Brother Martin."

Grand rough old Martin Luther
 Bloomed fables—flowers and furze,
 The better the uncouthier,
 Do roses stick, or burrs ?²

¹ "Table Talk."

² Robert Browning.

"A man's heart," says Luther, "is like some foul stable; wheelbarrows and shovels are of little use except to remove some of the surface filth, and to litter all the passages in the process. What is to be done with it? Turn the Elbe into it. The flood will sweep away all the pollution." No one can question what he means here. Nor can we question his purpose, either, when he deals with the ecclesiastical corruption of his time. "Courage," he exclaims as he faces the King of England and his doctors who are defending the Romish faith, "swine that you are! burn me if you can and dare. Here I am; do your worst upon me. Scatter my ashes to all the winds—spread them through all seas. My spirit shall pursue you still. . . Luther shall leave you neither peace nor rest till he has crushed in your brows of brass and dashed out your iron brains."¹ That humor which is so formidable because it is so full of common sense, and so lovable because it is so essentially human, Luther possessed to a rare degree. It distinguished him from many other reformers; and to him it was the saving grace which, to their loss, they lacked. There was an end of controversy over trifles when to the man who sent to inquire of him whether baptism might be administered with warm water, Luther sent reply, "Tell the blockhead that water is water, whether cold or warm." The fearless champion of truth at Augsburg has an eye for quaint similitudes when he says: "How many devils were there, thinkest thou, last year, at the Diet at Augsburg? Every bishop brought as many devils there as a dog has fleas at St. John's time. But God sent thither also more

¹ Froude, Vol. I., p. 135.

numerous and more powerful angels, so that their evil purpose was defeated. And howbeit the devils stood in our way, and we were forced to separate ere peace was made, yet were our enemies unable to accomplish aught that they meditated and desired." His imagination was matter for remark even in boyhood. It inspired his noble piety. It helped him to see how the world which was ruined in Adam's fall would be recovered in the new era in the dawn of which he was standing. It added to many of his sermons a charm that made their plainer passages all the more effective:

I saw lately two miracles. First, as I looked out at the window, I saw the stars in the heavens and the whole fair dome of God ; yet did I see no pillars on which the Master had placed this dome. Nevertheless, the heavens fell not, and the dome stands yet fast. Now there are some that seek for such pillars. They would fain lay hold of and feel them. And because they cannot do this, they struggle and tremble as though the heaven must certainly fall for no other reason than because they cannot seize or see the pillars. Could they but lay hold of these, the heaven would stand firm.

Next, I saw also great thick clouds hover over us with such weight that they might be likened to a great sea. Yet I saw no floor upon which they rested or found footing, nor any vessels in which they were contained. Still they fell not down upon us, but greeted us with a sour face and flew away. When they were gone, then shone forth both the floor and our roof which had held them—the rainbow. That was a weak, thin, small floor and roof ; and it vanished in the clouds ; and, in appearance, was more like an image such as is seen through a painted glass, than a strong floor. So that one might despair on account of the floor, as well as on account of the great weight of water. Nevertheless, it was found in truth that this almighty image (such it seemed) bore the burden of the waters and protected us. Yet there be some who consider, regard, and fear the water and the thickness of the clouds and the heavy burden of them, more than this thin, nar-

row, and light image. For they would fain feel the strength of the image, and because they cannot do this, they fear that the clouds will occasion an everlasting flood.

To the sweeter and gentler strain in Luther's preaching we are also indebted for this passage, which illustrates equally his sturdy straightforwardness. It is taken from his "House Postils":¹

There is no other virtue so glorious as love. What we dearly love we are ready to defend and protect at the risk of our life. Patience, chastity, temperance, etc., are also praiseworthy virtues, but cannot be compared with love; she is queen over them all, and comprehends them all. Surely if one is pious and righteous he will not defraud or injure his brother, but will assist him in everything; but if we love a person, we are ever ready to devote ourselves entirely to his welfare and to assist him, according as he has need, with our counsel and our possessions. Thus, as Christ declares in our text, does God also do toward us. He gives us blessings beyond measure, not because he is patient or because we are righteous and deserve it, but through love, the greatest of all virtues. In view of this fact our hearts should awake, all our sadness should vanish, for we see before us the inexhaustible love of the divine heart, which we ought to cherish in true faith as the greatest of all gifts, knowing that God is the highest and most glorious giver of blessings unto us, and that they all proceed from the greatest of all virtues.

The fact that anything is given from true love makes the gift itself greater and more precious. If, therefore, we are convinced that love prompts the bestowal of any gift, we are well pleased; but when we doubt the existence of this motive in the giver, we care but little for his gift. Thus, if God had given us only one eye or one foot and we were convinced that fatherly love prompted him to do this we would be entirely content and better satisfied than we would otherwise be if we had a hundred eyes and a hundred feet.

¹ John 3 : 16-21.

III. Other German Preachers.¹ The succession of preachers in Germany might easily be shown to illustrate the condition of the times as the centuries passed on. Luther's love for Tauler was found also in Arndt, who, by his words and writings, was a source of spiritual life to multitudes; to none more than to Spener, a true reformer, who insisted on careful exposition of the word in preaching; Francke is not much remembered as a preacher, but his name is immortal in the annals of philanthropy; Bengel left a commentary on the New Testament which is unrivaled for spiritual insight; Zinzendorf, the most famous name in the missionary awakening of the early part of the eighteenth century, attracted large crowds by his ardent preaching of the doctrine of justification by faith; and Schleiermacher, teaching a freer handling of the Bible, appealing to its general spirit rather than to a formal enumeration of proof texts, put himself in the first rank of preachers, and influenced as did no other man the religious thought of the century; Nitzsch carried his heart into his study of the Bible, and taught doctrine touched with feeling; and not less than Nitzsch, Tholuck, with no love for formal rules, insisted that a true sermon, while it has heaven for its father, must have the earth for its mother. Stier laid stress on the need of the living breath of the Holy Spirit in order to understand the teachings of Scripture; and Krummacher, the son of a preacher and a poet, was during his long ministry alike the poet and the preacher of the pulpit.²

¹ Arndt, b. 1555; Spener, b. 1635; Francke, b. 1663; Bengel, b. 1687; Zinzendorf, b. 1700; Schleiermacher, b. 1768; Nitzsch, b. 1787; Tholuck, b. 1799; Stier, b. 1800; Krummacher, b. 1796.

² Summarized from Ker.

IV. Zwingli (1484-1531). There are other preachers who need to be mentioned in our study of the life and times of Luther. One of the most powerful was his contemporary Zwingli, the reformer of Switzerland, opposed to him in many of his doctrinal views, but equally earnest and fearless. Under the preaching of Zwingli, sustained by a statesmanlike policy, the breach with Rome in his city and canton was widened until reconciliation was impossible. He became the head of the Reformed Church in Switzerland, and in a war with a neighboring canton, in which the "worshippers of idols" were defied as "sacrilegious scoundrels," Zwingli fell. After the conflict the enemy found him lying on his back, his hands folded in prayer, his eyes directed to heaven. They did not recognize him, but as he refused the aid of a priest or to invoke the intercession of the saints, they detected him for a heretic, and a sword driven through his heart released him from his sufferings. Early in life Zwingli attracted attention as a preacher. "I never entered the pulpit," he said, "without taking the words of the gospel and expounding them by means of the Scripture."¹ He read widely in the classics, and enriched his sermons from the staple collections of pulpit illustrations. When he became a Protestant he made the Bible rather than the classics his authority. His sermons were necessarily largely controversial, and were often called forth by the exigencies of the times; but he never surrendered his high conception of the pulpit. "Preaching," he said, "I believe to be a work most holy. Among all nations the outward preaching of evangelists or bishops has

¹ S. M. Jackson, "Life of Zwingli," p. 88.

preceded faith, which we, nevertheless, say is received by the Spirit alone.”¹

V. Hubmaier (1480-1528). In the course of his life as a controversialist Zwingli came into conflict with a man originally his friend, Balthasar Hubmaier,² who, from being a Romanist became successively Lutheran, Zwinglian, and finally Baptist. He was a preacher of remarkable power, but his convictions on the subject of baptism received no more consideration from the Reformed than they would have received from the Romanists, and he was imprisoned, tortured, and in the end burnt. His wife, who shared his views, was drowned. It is a pitiful story, and belongs to our history only in so far as it is right to preserve the name of a preacher of whom the world would have heard more had it suffered him to live longer.

VI. John Calvin (1509-1554). Five years after Zwingli fell on the battlefield of Cappel, began the public career of the man whose name was to be closely associated with his and Luther's in the conflicts of the age, but who would ultimately eclipse both of them in fame as a theologian, and influence the religious thought of Christendom for the next five centuries as powerfully as, for the twelve centuries which preceded him, Augustine had done. This was John Calvin.

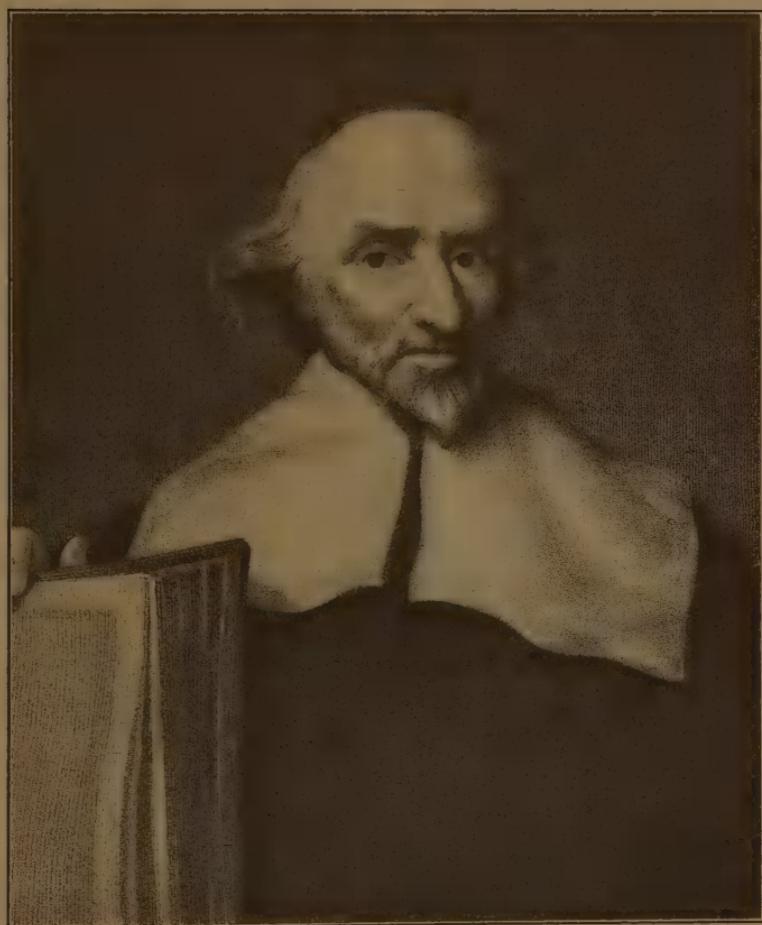
The ferment of religious zeal in Zurich was by no means confined to that city. In 1533 the French reformer, William Farel (1489-1565), came to Geneva. He had been crusading on behalf of the new faith

¹ S. M. Jackson, “Life of Zwingli,” p. 478.

² Armitage, “History of the Baptists,” p. 336; Burrage, “History of the Anabaptists,” 68 *et seq.*

among the Waldenses in the French Alps. In Geneva he met the young reformer, John Calvin, who, in the interest of his feeble health and at the promptings of his own tastes was proposing to devote his life to quiet study. Farel, practical, full of fire and eloquence, an orator born, gifted with a voice melodious and sonorous, gestures expressive and telling, a fluency of language which often became vehement, and an earnestness of feeling which sometimes mistook impulse for inspiration, saw in Calvin the man of the future. And to-day Farel is remembered chiefly because, thanks to these varied gifts, he succeeded in converting the studious young Genevan into the man of affairs, "the lord chancellor of the nations." Beza (1519-1605), the reformer, who knew him well and heard him often, declared that with Calvin "every word weighed a pound." The amount of his preaching was surprising. Lecturing in Geneva to hundreds of students; controlling the theocracy which he had established in that city; virtually at the head of the Reformed party in Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, England, and Scotland; composing the extensive and profound works which made his fame as a theologian; this fragile invalid would often preach every day. His style was admirably suited to his thought; simple and accurate, direct and forcible, and marked by that transparent clearness which is the distinguishing feature of the best French oratory.

The contrast between Calvin and Luther brings us face to face with the distinctive features of the Latin and the Saxon, the French and the German races. Calvin, feeble-looking, slender, diminutive, bent, stands



JOHN KNOX

in the pulpit as the embodiment of intellect and will. He has little imagination, little humor, little of what we understand by humanity. We are almost tempted at times, as we follow his career, to say with Döllinger,¹ "The Picard Calvin was no doubt loyal to his convictions, but he was hard and cruel, and totally wanting in any feeling for the natural beauties in the midst of which he lived." No doubt it is true that he was not a man of the people, as were Luther and Zwingli. If Calvin gained his hearers by strategy, Luther carries them by storm. Broad-shouldered, burly, florid, full of fancy, sensibility, sympathy, Luther may often be coarse and sometimes extravagant, but he is always a man of like passions with ourselves.

VII. John Knox (1505-1572). The Calvinism of Geneva, not the Lutheranism of Wittenburg, found its heartiest welcome in Scotland and its most notable representative preacher in John Knox. In Germany the Reformation was supported by princes and nobles. In England it possessed itself of the throne and became an established religion. But in Scotland, with a few memorable exceptions, it gathered to its standard, for the most part, farmers, laborers, artisans, tradesmen, and some among the smaller gentry, and created a body of men brave, noble, resolute, and daring.² In time they formed the laws and the creed of the land and determined its after fortunes as a nation. Scotland is the triumph of Calvinism, and to John Knox in its first victorious stages that triumph is mainly due. One of the sweetest and saintliest of the reformers, George Wish-

¹ "Conversations," p. 146.

² Froude, "Shorter Studies," Vol. I., p. 153.

art, was burned by Cardinal Beaton on the first of March, 1540, in front of his castle of St. Andrews. John Knox would have shared his fate gladly, but Wishart bade him return to his bairns: "One is sufficient for one sacrifice." The mantle of the martyr fell on his disciple and friend, and Knox suddenly became a prominent figure in the troubled life of Scotland. The iron went into his soul also, and his life was for many years the life of an exile and wanderer for conscience' sake.¹ Within a year of Wishart's death Knox was toiling wearily at the oars, a galley slave held captive by the French. When off St. Andrews his fellow-prisoners pointed out to him the steeple of the kirk. "Yes," said the emaciated prisoner, "I know it well; I am fully persuaded how weak so ever I now appear, that I shall not depart this life till that my tongue shall glorify his godly name in the same place." The prophecy came true in time, but in the interval there were years of banishment from his country; quiet years, some of them, spent in preaching to his fellow-exiles in Geneva and in drinking in the spirit and faith of John Calvin.

When Knox returned to Scotland it was to become the great ecclesiastical power of his country. He was intensely patriotic, and Mary, Queen of Scots and her mother, Mary of Lorraine, feared no other person in all the land as they feared him. "Yon man," the fair Mary cried, after one interview with him, "gart me greet, and grat never tear himself."² When young Darnley, her husband, stretched a point, Catholic though he was, and came to hear Knox, the preacher took as his text, "Other lords than thou have had dominion

¹ Innes' "Life of Knox," p. 25.

² *Ibid.*, p. 135.

over us," and explained that God had sometimes permitted such lords to be "boys and women," and dwelt on the weakness of Ahab in not controlling his strong-minded queen, Jezebel. The service was also an hour longer than the king had expected it to be, and in a fury he flung himself out of the church, refused to dine and rushed off to his hawking. Knox was ordered not to preach while the court remained in town. He lived to see better times, however, and to thank God that "the gospel of Jesus Christ is truly and simply preached throughout Scotland."¹ As he drew near to the close of his life his own preaching seemed to grow stronger if more tender. Toward the end we see him at St. Andrew's so weak that he has to be lifted into the pulpit, "where," says the chronicler, "he had to lean at his first entry; but before he had done with his sermon he was so active and vigorous that he was like to ding the pulpit in blads, and fly out of it." The student who makes this note in his little book, adds that when Knox "entered to the application of his text he made me so to thrill and tremble that I could not hold a pen to write."² His dying wish, when his mind was wandering, was to go to church to preach on the resurrection of Christ; and to his wife he called, "Go read where I cast my first anchor," and she read the seventeenth chapter of John, and a part of Calvin's "Commentary on the Ephesians." The galley with oars was his prison no longer, he caught the songs of the redeemed; "I praise God for that heavenly sound," he

¹ Innes, p. 143.

² See W. M. Taylor, "The Scottish Pulpit"; and W. G. Blaikie, "The Preachers of Scotland."

said, and then, with a deep sigh of relief, "Now it is come," he added under his breath; and the man who never feared an earthly sovereign, saw the face of the great King and was satisfied.

VIII. Hugh Latimer (*c. 1490-1555*). In England the progress of the Reformation was slow. During the brief reign of Mary it was arrested entirely so far as any public manifestation of it was concerned. Hugh Latimer, who may almost be said to be the father of the English pulpit, was burnt at the stake three years before the death of Mary put an end to the ascendancy of Rome in the realm. Already, however, there had been a revival of preaching. Wycliffe's "Simple Priests" found their successors in "The King's Preachers" appointed under Edward VI. to itinerate through the more benighted parts of the country preaching the doctrines of the Reformation. Of these the best known was John Bradford, 1500-1555, who was martyred under Mary. "A master of speech," says a contemporary, "his eloquence native, masculine, modest, in one word, heavenly, for if you mark him he savors and breathes nothing but heaven; yea, he sparkles, thunders, lightens; pierces the soft, breaks only the stony heart."¹

To Latimer we turn as the foremost preacher of the English Reformation period. Latimer was little else than a preacher. He was not, as was Luther, a ruler of men; he was not, as was Calvin, a great theologian; he was not, as was Knox, a political power. But his diligence in preaching was extreme. Foxe says that even when he was busiest with his episcopal duties he

¹ Brown, "Puritan Preaching in England," p. 47.

preached for the most part every Sunday. Itinerating was his delight. As to where he preached he was indifferent—in the church, if church there were, if not, on the wayside or in the market-place. Rarely did he fail of getting an audience, although the old country customs would sometime interfere. Preaching before King Edward VI., he told this story :

I sent word overnight to a town that I would preach there in the morning, because it was a holy day. When I came to the church where I thought I should have found a great company, the door was fast locked. I tarried half an hour. At last one of the parish comes to me and says : "Sir, this is a busy day with us ; we cannot hear you ; it is Robin Hood's day ; the parish are gone abroad to gather for Robin Hood. I pray you hinder them not." So I was fain to give place to Robin Hood.¹

He was feeling his way to the new doctrine when the little chapel of the Augustine monastery in Cambridge would be crowded to listen to his fearless sermons to the times. "When Master Latimer preached," so ran the common saying, "then was Cambridge blessed." "Take away preaching" he himself said, "and take away salvation. . . Preaching is the thing the devil hath wrestled most against. This office of preaching is the only ordinary way which God hath appointed to save us all." As Bishop of Worcester he enjoined on his clergy "that preaching be not set aside for any manner of observance in the church, as procession, and other ceremonies." No man of his time was heard with such general delight and profit as was Latimer. To preach before the king in the public garden of the palace, for no room indoors would accommodate the throng of his

¹ Demaus, "Life of Latimer," p. 61.

hearers, was little to his taste. "There was," says he, "constant walking up and down, and such a buzzing and huzzing in the preacher's ear that it maketh him often forget his matter." In the open space before St. Paul's a cross surmounted what has been called, without exaggeration, the most celebrated pulpit in England.¹ This was the spot where Latimer could be heard at his best. The open air seemed to set him free from the trammels which the walls of a church or the bounds of a palace imposed. Nowhere else did he use so great plainness of speech. Here it was, for instance, that one Sunday he said that the bishops, abbots, friars, parsons, canons resident, priests and all, were "strong thieves; yea dukes, lords, and all."² "The king," said he, "made a marvelous good act of Parliament that certain men should sow every one of them two acres of hemp; but it were all too little were it so much more to hang the thieves in England. Bishops, abbots, with such others, should not have so many servants, nor so many dishes; but go to their first foundation, to keep hospitality, to feed the needy people, not jolly fellows with golden chains and velvet gowns." No wonder that the citizens quoted his latest sayings, that the boys followed him on the streets with their good wishes, and that even the king, who knew an honest subject when he met him, listened to him with admiration. In the church of St. Margaret's, Westminster, under the shadow of the abbey, you may still find this entry in the church wardens' accounts for 1549: "Paid to William Curlewe for mending of divers pews that were

¹ Walton's "Lives" (Hooker); Wilmott's "Jeremy Taylor," pp. 48, 49.

² Demaus, p. 213.

broken down when Doctor Latimer did preach, one shilling and six pence." The pews had to suffer, and the church wardens to pay the penalty, for having so popular a preacher in the pulpit.

The characteristics of Latimer's preaching are as easily read as is his own character. 1. His sermons were extremely scriptural. There had been a time when as a student at Cambridge he took his part in burning Luther's works in the presence of Cardinal Wolsey. But this was in the days of his ignorance. Now his urgent wish was that the Bible should be in the hearts of the people. Prior Buckenham, answering Latimer's "Sermon on the Cards," in which he had declared that all ought to have free permission to read the Bible for themselves, tried to show that inevitably this must be followed by all manners of catastrophes. "Thus when Scripture saith, 'No man that layeth his hand to the plow and looketh back is meet for the kingdom of God' will not the plowman when he readeth these words be apt forthwith to cease from his plow, and then where will be the sowing and reaping? . . And so also, when the simple man reads the words, 'If thine eye offend thee pluck it out, and cast it from thee,' incontinent he will pluck out his eye, and the whole realm will be full of blind men to the great decay of the nation. And thus by reading of holy Scripture will the whole kingdom come in confusion." To a wit so nimble as was Latimer's, the retort was ready enough. The figures of Scripture, he said, were not mysteries, nor was the use of figures confined to its pages. "Every speech hath its metaphors so common to all men that the very painters do paint them on walls and in

houses. As, for example (and here he looked straight into the cowled face of the prior) "when they paint a fox preaching out of a friar's cowl, none is so mad as to take this to be a fox that preacheth, but know well enough the meaning of the matter, which is to paint out unto us what hypocrisy, craft, and dissimulation lie hid many times in these friars' cowls, warning us thereby to beware of them."

2. This reference to the "Sermon on the Cards" reminds us of his happy choice of subjects. Christmas was celebrated by much playing of cards, and he proposed to show his hearers how they might play with Christ's cards so as to be winners and not losers. Then he went on to take some of the leading words of Jesus which are often misunderstood, and to explain them clearly. The "Sermon of the Plough" is still better known, and we have no finer specimen of Latimer's style. One catches the preacher's tone still in such noble utterances as these :

And now I would ask a strange question : Who is the most diligentest bishop and prelate in all England, that passeth all the rest in doing his office ? I can tell, for I know him who it is ; I know him well. And will you know who it is ? I will tell you : it is the devil. He is the most diligent preacher of all other ; he is never out of his diocese ; he is never from his cure ; ye shall never find him unoccupied ; ye shall never find him out of the way ; call for him when you will, he is ever at home ; he is ever at his plow ; no lording nor loitering can hinder him ; ye shall never find him idle, I warrant you. And his office is to hinder religion, to maintain superstition, to set up idolatry, to teach all kinds of popery. Where the devil is resident and hath his plow going, then away with books and up with the candles, away with the Bibles and up with beads, away with the light of the gospel and up with the light of the candles, yea, at noondays. Down

with Christ's cross, up with purgatory ; away with clothing the naked, the poor, and impotent ; up with the decking of images and gay garnishing of stocks and stones ; up with man's traditions and his laws, down with God's traditions and his most holy word. Let all things be done in Latin ; there must be nothing but Latin ; God's word may in no wise be translated into English. Oh, that our prelates would be as diligent to sow the corn of good doctrine as Satan is to sow cockle and darnel !

3. Never was preacher more fearless and outspoken ; never one who used language less than did he to conceal thought. Once, indeed, in the earlier days of his life as a priest he made his submission to the church, and sought forgiveness for his heresies. But this brief moment of weakness was quickly atoned for. Before the whole congregation in his first church he stood up and with tears confessed his cowardice. "Such a hell as was in his bosom," he declared, "he would not again feel for all the world's wealth." And there was no after treachery to his conscience. With this exception a frank and manly courage is one distinct note in Latimer's preaching. Cardinal Wolsey had no sympathy with the Reformation, but when Latimer was summoned before him as one "infected with the new fantastical doctrines of Luther," he was unable to resist the fearless honesty of the young preacher. "If the Bishop of Ely," said he to Latimer, "cannot abide such doctrine as you have here repeated you shall have my license, and shall preach it unto his beard, let him say what he will." One day he exclaimed at the beginning of his sermon : "Latimer, Latimer, thou art going to speak before the high and mighty king Henry VIII., who is able, if he think fit, to take thy life away. Be careful what thou sayest. But Latimer, Latimer, remember also thou art

about to speak before the King of kings and Lords of lords. Take heed that thou dost not displease him." In this spirit he dared to quote, with a close personal application, the words "whoremongers, adulterers, God shall judge." Such fearlessness cost him many a struggle. Preaching before Henry's son, Edward VI., he recalled his perilous experiences at the court then :

In the king's days that dead is, a many of us were called together before him to say our minds on certain matters. In the end one kneeleth him down and accuseth me of sedition, that I had preached seditious doctrine. The king turned to me and said : "What say ye of that, sir?" Then I kneeled down, and turned me first to mine accuser and required him : "Sir, what form of preaching would you appoint me to preach before a king? Would you have me for to preach nothing as concerning a king in a king's sermon? Have you any commission to appoint me what I shall preach?" Besides this I asked him divers other questions, and he would make no answer to none of them all ; he had nothing to say. Then I turned me to his grace and said : "I never thought myself worthy, nor I never sued to be a preacher before your grace, but I was called to it, and would be willing, if you mislike me, to give place to my betters. But if your grace allow me for a preacher, I would desire your grace to give me leave to discharge my conscience ; give me leave to frame my doctrine according to my audience ; I had been a very dolt to have preached so at the borders of your realm as I preach before your grace." The king smiled and turned to another communication.

His honest soul revolted against the tricks of popery. At St. Paul's he exhibited from the pulpit a certain image called the Rood of Grace; and the contemptible jugglery by which the pulling of concealed cords made it roll its eyes, shake its head, open or shut its mouth, was plainly exposed to the congregation. After this

Bishop Latimer "carried a small image in his hand which he threw out of the church, though the inhabitants of the country whence it came constantly affirmed that eight oxen would be unable to remove it from its place." So the popular song laughed this hoary fraud to scorn :

The sweet Rood of Ramsbury
Twenty miles from Malmesbury
Was oftentimes put in fear ;
And now at the last
He hath a bridling cast,
And is gone, I know not where.

To those who offered and took bribes he was as severe as on the juggling priests. "If the great men in Turkey should use in their religion of Mohammed to sell, as our patrons commonly sell benefices here, the office of preaching, the office of salvation, it should be taken as an intolerable thing. . . Well, let patrons take heed, for they shall answer for all the souls that perish through their default."

4. These illustrations from Latimer's sermons reveal to us another source of power, which he shared with Luther and many of the world's greatest preachers. He had at his command an inexhaustible store of homely and effective humor. He tells a story of a bishop on his visitation finding that the church bell could not welcome him because it had lost its clapper, and how one among the people, wiser than the rest, came up to the bishop, "Why, my lord," saith he, "doth your lordship make so great a matter of the bell that lacketh a clapper? Here is a bell," saith he (and pointed to the pulpit), "which hath lacked a clapper these twenty years." "Strawberry preachers" he called the prelates and

priests who rarely were seen in the pulpit. Their season was but once a year. "Oh, that a man might have the contemplation of hell! That the devil would allow a man to looke into hell, to see the state of it, as he shewed all the worlde when he tempted Christ in the wilderness. But I say if one were admitted to view hell thus, and behold it thorowelie, the devil would say, On yonder side are punished unpreaching prelates." It will be seen that his humor was often terribly in earnest. It was always robust. A clergyman was made controller of the mint. "Is this a meet office," inquires Latimer, "for a priest who has cure of souls? I would ask one question. I would fain know who controls the devil at home while he controls the mint? If the apostle might not leave his office of preaching to be a deacon, shall one leave it for minting? I cannot tell you; but the saying is that since priests have been minters money hath been worse." Not alone were his shafts directed against wickedness in high place. At times they would shoot folly on the wing. Here is what he says of the dress of the fashionable woman of his day :

What was her swaddling cloth wherein holy Mary laid the King of heaven and earth? No doubt it was poor gear; peradventure it was her kerchief which she took from her head or such like gear, for I think Mary had not much fine gear. She was not trimmed up as our women are nowadays. I think, indeed, Mary had never a farthingale, for she used no such superfluities as our damsels do nowadays, for in the old time women were content with honest and single garments. Now they have found out these round-abouts; they were not invented then—the devil was not so cunning to make such gear, he found it out afterward. Therefore Mary had it not.

This unquenchable humor, which had in it nothing cynical or saturnine, but was wholesome and helpful, accompanied him to the last. "You look that I should burn," he said to his jailer when Mary had thrown him into the Tower of London, an old man, ill-clad, and fireless; "but except you let me have some fire I am like to deceive your expectations, for I am like here to starve from cold."¹

While he was in prison he read over the New Testament seven times. Much of his time was spent in prayer, and he continued kneeling so long that he was frequently unable to rise from his knees without help. Three things he used to pray for with peculiar fervency; one was that God would give him grace to stand to his doctrine till death; another was, that God would of his mercy restore the gospel of Christ to the realm of England once again. He often repeated those two words "once again." The third was that God would preserve the Princess Elizabeth, and make her a comfort to England. His prayers were answered. He kept the faith to the end; the gospel of Christ was restored to the realm, and although he did not live to hail her accession, the Princess Elizabeth did come to the throne. At the very last, as they led him to the stake, "having a kerchief on his head, and upon it a nightcap or two, and a great cap such as townsmen use, with two broad flaps to button under his chin, wearing an old threadbare Bristol frieze gown, girded to his body with a penny leathern girdle, at the which hanged by a long string of leather his Testament; and his spectacles without case depending about his neck

¹ Charles Stanford, "Latimer."

upon his breast, the constant flame of his humor played about his faith, and left us with his immortal words, spoken first to his fellow-martyr Ridley, but now one of the golden sayings of the world: “Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle by God’s grace in England as shall never be put out.”

The reform in the parish church, the restoration of preaching to its true place for which Latimer worked so diligently, could not come in a day. For many years after Elizabeth ascended the throne the remoter parts of England were much neglected. In 1570 Grindel, newly appointed Archbishop of York, ordered that in his diocese “no peddler should be admitted to sell his wares in the church porch in time of service, that parish clerks should be able to read, that no lords of misrule or disguised persons, morrice dancers or others should come irreverently into the church, or play any unseemly parts with scoffs, jests, wanton gestures or ribald talk, in the time of divine service.”¹ In all the province of York, four years earlier, there could not be found twelve ministers able to preach.² In many a church no sermon had been preached for years. The diocese of Ely contained one hundred and fifty-six parishes, of which forty-seven had no ministers at all, fifty-seven were in the hands of careless non-residents, and only fifty-two were regularly served. To this condition of things there were memorable exceptions.

It was during the reigns of Edward VI., Mary, and Elizabeth that Bernard Gilpin (1517-1583) earned for himself the title of “Apostle of the North.” He was

¹ William Gilpin, “Life of Bernard Gilpin,” p. 161.

² Brown, p. 45.

only a child when to his father's hall came, one Saturday evening, a begging friar seeking food and shelter. "The plenty set before him," says the chronicler, "was a temptation too strong for his virtue; of which it seems he had not sufficient even to save appearances." Next day, however, he ordered the bell to toll and from the pulpit preached with great vehemence against the sins of the times, and particularly against drunkenness. Little Bernard Gilpin, sitting on his mother's knee, could not keep silence, but cried out that he wondered "how that man could preach against drunkenness when he himself had been drunk the night before." The shrewdness and honesty of his childhood were followed by a youth of great promise and a brilliant university career. At Oxford he preached before the young king Edward VI., and the highest honors of the church would no doubt have been his had he not chosen the lot of preacher at large, and from his parish of Houghton le Spring, in the county of Durham, struck out over moor and mountain carrying everywhere the message of the gospel. In the winter he would penetrate the wildest part of Northumberland, and here where Bede, and, earlier yet, Paulinus had first preached Christianity, among a people scarcely less barbarous than they were then, he did the work of an evangelist. Their disputes these savage clansmen would settle by an appeal to arms even in the parish church itself. Each contending party would muster what adherents he could, and wage a kind of petty war. So a private grudge would often occasion much bloodshed. In one of Gilpin's annual visitations, there was a quarrel of this kind at Rothbury. During the first two or three

days of his preaching, the contending parties observed some decorum, and never appeared at church together. At length, however, they met. One party had been early to church, and just as Gilpin began his sermon, the other entered. They did not stand long quiet, but mutually inflamed at the sight of each other, began to clash their weapons. Awed, however, by the sacredness of the place, the tumult in some degree ceased, and Gilpin proceeded with his sermon. In a short time, the combatants again brandished their weapons, and approached each other. Gilpin then descended from the pulpit, went between the combatants, and addressing their leaders, put an end to their quarrel for the time, although he could not effect an entire reconciliation. They promised, however, that until the sermon was over, they would not disturb the congregation. He then returned to the pulpit, and devoted the rest of his time in endeavoring to make the combatants ashamed of their conduct. His behavior and discourse affected them so much that, at his further entreaty, they agreed to abstain from all acts of hostility while he continued in the country.

On another occasion, Gilpin going into the church, observed a glove hanging up, which he was told was a challenge to any one that should take it down. He ordered the sexton to give it to him, but he refused. Gilpin then took it down himself, and put it in his breast. When the congregation was assembled, he went into the pulpit, and in the course of his sermon severely censured these inhuman challenges. "I hear," said he, "that one among you has hung up a glove, even in this sacred place, threatening to fight any one who

should take it down. See, I have done this," holding up the glove to the congregation, and again inveighing in strong terms against such un-Christian practices.

Bernard Gilpin was called to London during the reign of Mary to answer to the charge of heresy, and it was a broken leg, the result of a fall from his horse when on his way to be tried, that saved his life by delaying his arrival until after Queen Mary's death. The soldiers who were conveying him as their prisoner would often taunt him with one of his own favorite sayings, "that nothing happened us but what was for our good." "Is this thy broken leg, then, for thy good?" said they. "I make no question but it is"; and the result proved him to be entirely right. Gilpin's whole life was passed in the North of England. He refused a bishopric. He would accept no richer living. His purse was at the service of the needy, his meal was shared with the hungry, and when he died what little he left he left wholly to the poor. In building schools for his parish he was the pioneer of a better parochial education; by visiting the jails he anticipated the labors of John Howard, and by working in a spirit of hopeful faith for the reformation of the most abandoned he preceded by three centuries the city missions of our own times. Attracted by the fame of Gilpin's labors, Lord Burleigh, the great lord treasurer of Queen Elizabeth, turned aside in a journey from Edinburgh to visit him. The abundant hospitality of the good man's house, the crowd of gentlemen, scholars, workmen and poor people who gathered about him, the fine courtesy and equally fine simplicity of the man who seemed so true a successor of his Lord and his apostles, all served to

lift the statesman into a region higher and purer than that of the court. When the hour came for him to leave he reluctantly tore himself away, and, reining in his horse as he left the happy valley, with undisguised envy he cast his eye over the tranquil scene, and sighed, "There is the enjoyment of life indeed! and who can blame that man for not accepting of a bishopric! What doth he want to make him greater, or happier, or more useful to mankind!"

VIII

THE GOLDEN AGE OF ENGLISH PREACHING

(THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)

ACCORDING to Dean Swift our English tongue was at its best from Elizabeth to the Commonwealth. For about a hundred years the language of the street, the home, the college, and the court was superior to anything that has been heard since. In literature, not only for substance but for sound as well, the age of Queen Elizabeth was a Golden Age. "Those Elizabethans," as Matthew Arnold says, "had a sense of diction." Shakespeare was only one in a superb group of great masters of prose and poetry. Spenser and Sydney, Raleigh and Bacon, wrote lines which, if only for their music, can never be forgotten. For the nineties of the sixteenth century it is claimed that in no other ten years can you point to an equal number of masterpieces and masters. "It was an outburst of tropical luxuriance after a time of dearth."¹ *give me a break!*

The Golden Age of preaching, however, was not yet. At this time the pulpit did not lead, as it had so often done, but followed as though with laggard step.

I. The reasons for this are not far to seek. In the reign of Elizabeth literature was pursued for its own sake. Men listened to themselves as they polished their periods. This preaching when it is in earnest

¹ Brown, "Puritan Preaching," etc., p. 83.

never does. The sermon is a means to an end, and not the end itself. Self-consciousness is too apt to be the rock on which sincerity makes shipwreck.

2. The age was also a time of reaction following the Reformation. England had not come to her own in the matter of faith. She had been emptied from vessel to vessel, from Henry VIII. to Edward VI., from Edward to Mary, from Mary to Elizabeth. The teaching of the parish church, when teaching there was, carried with it no certain sound. Even in the reign of James I. it was generally believed that heresy could only be got rid of by death. Yet what was heresy? If Latimer had been burned for a Protestant, only a few years before he himself had preached a sermon when at the stake a Romanist was being consumed. The monarchs, Elizabeth first and then James, decreed what should and what should not be preached, but there were numbers of conscientious men and women who in matters of faith were not content to be dictated to by any earthly sovereign. In Scotland, indeed, one courageous follower of John Knox told Elizabeth openly in a sermon "she was like an untamed heifer that would not be ruled by God's people, but obstructed his disciples." Meanwhile wonderful devotion to the Bible sprang up, and so one might say, the congregation had the text before the preacher was ready with his sermon. To quote the historian Green :¹

England became the people of a book, and that book was the Bible. Elizabeth might silence or tune the pulpits ; but it was impossible for her to tune the great preachers of justice and mercy and truth who spoke from the book which she had again opened

¹ J. R. Green, "Short History," Chap. 8.

for the people. The whole temper of the nation was changed. A new conception of life and of man superseded the old. A new moral and religious impulse spread through every class.

3. Still, religious liberty came slowly. The Tudors were too masterful themselves to suffer every man to be his own master in the matter of his Christian faith and practice. Queen Elizabeth, as it has been put, believed in religious liberty, but it was liberty for her people to believe as she did. She held that two preachers were enough for a single county. Hundreds of the churches were still served by ignorant clergymen, who could not preach if they would, and would not if they could. "Sad the times in the beginning of Queen Elizabeth," Thomas Fuller says, "when the clergy were commanded to read the chapters over once or twice by themselves, so that they might be the better enabled to read them distinctly in the congregation."

I. Thomas Hooker (*c. 1553-c. 1600*). In the annals of the pulpit, one illustrious name belongs entirely to the reign of Elizabeth. Thomas Hooker¹ was born four years before she ascended the throne, and died two years before death closed her long reign. He was content with the life of a country clergyman. Two of his old pupils at the university found him rocking the cradle and tending sheep. "An obscure, harmless man," according to Isaac Walton, "a man in poor clothes, his loins usually girt in a coarse gown or canonical coat; of a mean stature and stooping and yet more lowly in the thoughts of his soul; his body worn out not with age, but study and holy mortification." This simple country parson, faithful in his

¹ See Walton's "Life of Hooker."

common duties, preaching to a small congregation, "inclining his people to meekness and mutual love," was the author of the most masterly defense of her principles to which the Church of England can lay claim, "The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity." He had, indeed, no pulpit graces. When he preached in Temple Church, London, his eye was fastened steadfastly in one direction, and studying as he spoke he was absorbed in his theme and almost unconscious of his audience. To rhetoric and gestures he had evidently given little heed; and yet, says Thomas Fuller, "he made good music without resin." Upon his tomb he is characterized as "Judicious Hooker," but his judgment as a writer in weighty matters is not his chief claim to our remembrance. "Possessed," as Isaac Walton says, "of a quiet and capacious soul," of powers of argument vigorous and majestic; in sentiment tranquil and lofty, in diction stately and musical, Hooker not only "built up our didactic prose as Shakespeare erected our drama," but he devoted that noble style to exalted subjects.¹ The level is indeed too uniform, but it is very lofty: "Dangerous it were for the feeble brain of man to wade far into the doings of the Most High, whom, although to know be life, and joy to make mention of his name; yet our soundest knowledge is to know that we know him not as indeed he is, neither indeed can know him; and our safest eloquence concerning him is our silence, when we confess that his glory is inexplicable, his greatness above our capacity to reach." There was a time when John Ruskin made Richard Hooker his model, and in the splendor of Ruskin's dic-

¹ R. A. Wilmott, "Bishop Jeremy Taylor," pp. 66, 67.

tion we often detect the influence of his master. A life of childlike simplicity prepared him for a death-bed on which, as he said, he "meditated the number and nature of angels, and their blessed obedience and order without which peace could not be in heaven, and, oh, that it might be so on earth." This is the strain of thought which runs through much of his discourse. Mark it, for instance, as he deals with the "Certainty and Perpetuity of Faith in the Elect":

It was not the meaning of our Lord and Saviour, in saying, "Father, keep them in thy name," that we should be careless to keep ourselves. To our own safety, our own credulity is required. And then, blessed forever and ever be that mother's child whose faith hath made him the child of God. The earth may shake, the pillars of the world may tremble under us, the countenance of heaven may be appalled, the sun lose his light, the moon her beauty, the stars their glory; but concerning the man that trusteth in God, if the fire had proclaimed itself unable as much as to singe a hair of his head—if lions, beasts ravenous by nature, and keen with hunger, being set to devour, have, as it were, religiously adored the flesh of the faithful man, what is there in the world that shall change his heart, overthrow his faith, alter his affection towards God, or the affection of God to him? If it be of this note, who shall make a separation between me and my God?

II. *Henry Smith (1550-1593).* The popular preacher of the same period was Henry Smith, whose distinctive title, saving him from being merged in the crowd of the same name, is "Silver-tongued"; and that, his admirer Thomas Fuller reminds us, "was but one notch below St. Chrysostom himself." He shared with other Puritan preachers a great admiration for the Old Testament, and certainly used it to practical purpose in the "one instance of many of the great prevalency he had

with his auditory," which Fuller selects. "He preached a sermon on Sarah's nursing of Isaac, and thereupon grounded the general doctrine that it was the duty of all mothers to nurse their own children. He pressed the application without respect of persons high or low, rich or poor, one with another."¹ There were other strains in Henry Smith, and at times not Dante himself could be more terrible.²

"Who can express that man's horror but himself"—he asks of the man who has rejected the warning conscience, and who suffers from the gnawing conscience which follows it—"who can express that man's horror but himself? Nay, what horrors are there which he cannot express himself? Sorrows are met in his soul at a feast, and fear, thought, and anguish divide his soul between them. All the furies of hell leap upon his heart like a stage. Thought calls to fear; fear whistleth to horror; horror beckoneth to despair, and saith, 'Come and help me torment this sinner.' One saith that she cometh from this sin, and another saith that she cometh from that sin; so he goeth through a thousand deaths and cannot die."

He had his counsels for preachers.³ "There is a kind of preachers risen up of late which shroud and cover every rustical and unsavory and childish and absurd sermon under the name of the simple kind of preaching. But indeed to preach simply is not to preach rudely, nor unlearnedly, nor confusedly, but to preach plainly and perspicuously, that the simple may understand what is taught, as if he did hear his name." His dramatic skill is seen as we pass down through his gallery of sermon hearers. The Athenian, who han-

¹ See G. A. Smith, "Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament," p. 244.

² Wilmott, p. 65.

³ Brown, pp. 87, 88.

kers after news of camp and council and court ; the musing hearer, who as soon as he is set falls into a brown study, and lets his mind run on his market, his journey, his dress, his dinner, or the sport which is to follow, “ and the sermon is done before the man thinketh where he is ” ; he who came to hear but falls fast asleep, as though he had been brought in for a corpse, and the preacher should preach at his funeral.” How mingled is the strain of Smith’s discourse, now quaint and almost fantastic, now direct and pointed, but whatever its tone never without a clear purpose at which he is driving, one more extract will show :¹

Now, if we be almost Christians, let us see what it is to be almost a Christian. Almost a son, is a bastard ; almost sweet, is unsavory ; almost hot is lukewarm, which God spueth out of his mouth (Rev. 3 : 16). So almost a Christian, is not a Christian, but that which God spueth out of his mouth. Almost a Christian, is like Jeroboam, which said, “ It is too far to go to Jerusalem to worship,” and therefore chose rather to worship calves at home. Almost a Christian is like Micah, which thought himself religious enough, because he had gotten a priest into his house. Almost a Christian is like the Ephraimites, which could not pronounce Shibboleth, but Sibboleth. Almost a Christian is like Ananias, which brought a part, but left part behind. Almost a Christian is like Eli’s sons, which polled the sacrifices ; like the fig tree, which deceived Christ with leaves ; like the virgins, which carried lamps without oil ; like the unwilling son, which said he would come and would not. What is it to be born almost ? If the new man be born almost, he is not born. What is it to be married almost into Christ ? He which is married but almost is not married. What is it to offer sacrifice almost ? The sacrifice must be killed, or ever it can be sacrificed. He which gives almost, gives not, but denieth. He which believeth almost, believeth not, but doubteth. Can the door which is but almost shut keep

¹ E. P. Hood, “ Lamps, Pitchers, and Trumpets,” pp. 51, 52.

out the thief? Can the cup which is but almost whole hold any wine? Can the ship which is but almost sound keep out water? The soldier which doth but almost fight is a coward. The physician which doth but almost cure, is a slubberer. The servant which doth but almost labor, is a loiterer. I cannot tell what to make of these defectives, nor where to place them, nor unto what to liken them. They are like unto children which sit in the market-place, where there is mourning and piping, and they neither weep nor dance, but keep a note between them both; they weep almost and dance almost. Believest thou almost? Be it unto thee (saith Christ) as thou believest. Therefore, if thou believest, thou shalt be saved—if thou believest almost, thou shalt be saved almost.

The accession of James I. gave to the pulpit an opportunity to bask in the sunshine of royal favor. James was one of the most contemptible of monarchs, but he had the highest opinion of his own wisdom, and especially considered himself no mean judge of a sermon. To flatter him became the fashion with men who had not been wont to flatter his predecessor. Bishop Bancroft, who opposed the motion for a new translation of the Bible, fawned upon his king as a greyhound might on his master; Bishop Whitgift credited him with the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and Donne,¹ who was his favorite preacher, ventured from Paul's Cross to prophesy that posterity would revere James as the peer of Ambrose or Augustine. The royal preference for the sermon was shamelessly favored. At whatever time in the service the king might enter, the prayers were broken off, the anthem began, and the preacher went into the pulpit.

Despite this temporary madness, which did little more

¹ Wilmott, pp. 86, 225.

than emasculate the preachers to the court, the sermon soon became far more powerful than it had been under Elizabeth.

At first alike in thought and style it was marred by an affected display of learning, by a subtlety more apparent than real, sometimes by coarse wit and unworthy word-play, and still oftener by extreme prolixity. The preacher of this age was no more equal to resisting the artful aid of alliteration than was an earlier occupant of the pulpit, Hugh Taverner, who preaching at St. Mary's, Oxford, in the sixteenth century, began his discourse to the students thus: "Arriving at the mount of St. Mary, in the stony stage where I now stand, I have brought you some fine biscuits baked in the oven of charity and carefully conserved for the chickens of the church, the sparrows of the Spirit and the sweet swallows of salvation."

In lines which are not entirely free from these pedantic turns, George Herbert (1593-1632), as saintly a man as ever entered the pulpit, besought the hearer to be considerate toward the conceit and pedantry which mar so many of the sermons of that age :

Judge not the preacher. . .

Do not grudge

To pick out treasures from an earthly pot.

The worst speak something good ; if all want sense

God takes a text, and preacheth patience.

Jest not at preacher's language or expression,

How knowest thou but thy sins make him miscarrie ?

Then turn thy faults and his into confession.

God sent him whatsoe'er he be : Oh, tarry,

And love him for his Master, his condition,

Though it be ill, makes him no ill Physician.

III. Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1624). From the blemishes of his time not even a preacher so famous as Lancelot Andrewes was free. We are not concerned now with the conflicting element in his public life. He was the advocate of Protestantism, and yet extreme in his high churchmanship. He could at the bidding of King James curse the foes of his royal master as no true man should, but in his "Private Devotions" we see a nature capable of the closest communion with its Father. His sermons often sin against taste. They are marred by childish puns, and blotted with bits of Latin : " Proceeding from the Father *totidem verbis*, and proceeding here from the Son *ad oculum* really, not in words only ; we may believe our eyes, we see Him so to proceed. Enough to clear the point *a Patre Filioque*." On the other hand, he often keeps very close to his text, and on its lines divides his discourse. That he does so is creditable to him and what we might look for in one who was prominent among the translators of our Authorized version of the Bible ; but it is equally true, as a contemporary of his says, that sometimes " he taketh a text and playeth with it, and toseth it about, and holdeth it up : lo ! here's a pretty thing, and there's a pretty thing." There are lofty passages in his sermons, although he is never happier than when his quaint wit has a chance to play about a serious subject. So likening Jonah in the whale to the security of the saint in death, he says :

There he was, but, look ! no hurt there. As safe, nay, more safe there, than in the best ship of Tharsis : no flaw of weather, no foul sea could trouble him there. As safe, and as safely carried to land : the ship could have done no more. So that upon the

matter he did but change his vehiculum (carriage), shifted but from one vessel to another ; went on his way still. On he went, as well—nay, better—than the ship would have carried him ; went into the ship, the ship carried him wrong, out of his way clean to Tharsisward ; went into the whale, and the whale carried him right, landed him on the next shore, to Nineveh, whither in truth he was bound, and where his errand lay. And all the while at ease, as in a cell or study, for there he indited a psalm. So as, in effect, where he seemed to be in most danger he was in the greatest safety. Thus can God work ; and the evening and morning were Jonah's second day.

The humor of this passage is characteristic not so much of Andrewes as of his age. It plays through the sermon of the high churchman and of the Puritan alike. With the buffoonery of the medieval preaching it has nothing in common, for it is spontaneous and natural, not forced and artificial. Perhaps from the troubles of the time, when the Stuarts were stirring up strife, and afterward when the people of England rose to assert their rights by the trial of Charles I., and, later yet, by the expulsion of his son James II., the preacher and his congregation found relief, as did Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War, in bursts of unexpected humor. The fountains of laughter and of tears lie very near the one to the other, and the most pathetic preacher is often the most humorous.

IV. John Donne (1573-1631). Three preachers of this period are specially distinguished by the brightness of their wit. These are, John Donne, Joseph Hall, and Thomas Fuller. Donne did not enter the ministry till his forty-second year, and even then only yielded unwillingly to the request of his sovereign. The recollections of a profligate youth—the shame of which “is written

across his extant poems in letters of fire "¹—held him back. His early life it was which wrung from him the bitter words, "Every man is but a sponge, a sponge filled with tears." We catch the remorseful note as he sings :

Wilt Thou forgive that sin which I have won
Others to sin, and made my sin their doom ?

Himself he had repented, and had been forgiven, but the memory of the unprofitable past haunted him to the end. "What penitence, what sins, what merits of his own, could wash out the stain with which such a life as his was imbued?" For sixteen years he preached with a fame which during his brief ministry was unsurpassed, although there were some (as says one of his admirers), who murmured that having been called to the vineyard late in the day he received his penny with the first.² The memorial of his contrition is still to be seen in St. Paul's Cathedral, London (of which he was dean), in the marble effigy of the preacher, in his shroud, with his eyes shut and with so much of the sheet turned aside as might show his lean, pale, and death-like face looking toward the east from whence he expected the second coming of his Saviour Jesus Christ. Vast congregations in St. Paul's or at the cross in front of it listened to Donne. Often they would give audible expression to their pleasure, when he made a specially telling point, and Donne would need to remind them that by "these impertinent interjections they swallowed up one quarter of his hour." On his part he delighted to preach. "I have always," he said, "been sorrier

¹ Lightfoot, "Historical Essays," p. 227.

² See "Life of Dean Milman," p. 303.

when I could not preach than any could be that they could not hear me." His friend and admirer Isaac Walton, who heard him often, gives us this description of Donne in the pulpit: "A preacher in earnest, weeping sometimes for his auditory, sometimes with them; always preaching to himself like an angel from a cloud, but in none; carrying some, as St. Paul was, to heaven in holy raptures, and enticing others by a sacred art and courtship to amend their lives; here picturing a vice so as to make it ugly to those that practised it; and a virtue, so as to make it beloved even by those that loved it not; and all this with a most particular grace, and an inexpressible addition of comeliness." After Donne had preached a sermon he never, says Isaac Walton, "gave his eyes rest till he had chosen out a new text, and that night cast his sermon into a form and his text into divisions." Saturday he gave himself holiday, so that refreshed, body and mind, "he might be enabled to do his work of the day following not faintly but with courage and cheerfulness." His sermons are like himself, full of faith but never lacking in freshness and fervor. If dullness in preaching be the unpardonable sin, certainly it is the one of which he may be acquitted. And his appearance, the thin and wasted features, the poetic cast of expression, the keen, importuning, melting eye, the speaking action harmonious with the sweet tone of his voice, added, no doubt, to the charm of his language. His style is often intensely graphic: "In the earth, in the grave there is no distinction. The angel that shall call us out of that dust will not stand to survey who lies naked, who in a coffin, who in wood, who in lead, who in a fine, who in a coarser sheet; in that one day of the

resurrection there is not a forenoon for lords to rise first and an afternoon for meaner persons to rise after; Christ was not whipped to save beggars and crowned with thorns to save kings: he died, he suffered all, for all.”¹ The short sharp sentence is very characteristic of Donne. Here it is that his humor appears, the humor of one of the first of English wits, “and as holy as witty. Wit was no flaw on his sacredness; he was a large-hearted man, and wit was an ornament to the beauty of his character.”² In him, as Walton happily puts it, “melancholy and pleasant humor were so co-tempered, that each gave advantage to the other, and made his company one of the delights of mankind.” Would he enforce the necessity of watchfulness against minor temptations? This is how he does it: “As men that rob houses thrust in a child at the window, and he opens greater doors for them, so lesser sins make room for greater.” Would he hit off the hearer who misses the main point? Here is his portrait: “He hears but the logic or the rhetoric or the ethic or the poetry of the sermon; but the sermon of the sermon he hears not.” This comparison is still apt: “Readers are of four sorts: sponges, which attract all without distinguishing; hour glasses, which receive and pour out as fast; bags, which retain only the dregs of the spices, and let the wine escape; and sieves, which retain the best only.”³ The quaintness of this thought does not detract from its reverence: “*In nubibus*; Christ does not come in a chariot and send carts for us. He comes as he went; ‘This same Jesus which is taken up from you into

¹ Works, Vol. II., p. 237.

² James Hannay, “Satire and Satirists,” p. 117.

heaven shall so come, in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven,' say the angels at his ascension." His last sermon was preached when the hand of death was already upon him, and it closed at Calvary: "We leave you in that blessed dependency, to hang upon Him that hung upon the cross. There bathe in his tears, there suck of his wounds, and lie down in peace in his grave, till he vouchsafes you a resurrection and an ascension into that kingdom which he hath purchased for you with the inestimable price of his incorruptible blood."

V. Joseph Hall (1574-1656). In Joseph Hall we have another type of character. Dedicated to God from his birth, and early brought into the ministry, he attracted immediate attention as a preacher, and rose to be Bishop of Norwich. His course was not an easy one, for he lived in troublous times, but Thomas Fuller playing on his writings sums it up when he says: "Not unhappy at controversies, more happy at comments, very good in his 'Characters,' better in his sermons, best of all in his 'Meditations.'" Driven by the Commonwealth party from his palace, he spent his last years in exile and poverty, yet in the end we may hope, proving his own words good: "May we have the grace but to follow the truth in love, we shall in these several tracks overtake her happily in the end, and find her embracing peace and crowning us with blessedness." Hall was both witty and wise, a master of word-play and verbal casuistry, occasionally offending in taste, but as a rule plain and pithy, and his sermons are "full of the cross of Christ."¹ Preaching before the House of Lords he

¹ Dean Alford.

certainly did not mince his words or disdain to interest his hearers with a story:

It can be no offense for me to say, that many of you who hear me this day, are not like to see so many suns walk over your heads as I have done. Yea, why speak I of this? There is not one of us that can assure himself of his continuance here one day. We are all tenants at will; and, for aught we know, may be turned out of these clay cottages at an hour's warning. Oh then, what should we do, but, as wise farmers, who know the time of their lease is expiring, and cannot be renewed, carefully and seasonably provide ourselves for a surer and more during tenure?

I remember our witty countryman, Bromiard, tells us of a lord in his time, that had a fool in his house, as many great men in those days had, for their pleasure; to whom this lord gave a staff, and charged him to keep it till he should meet with one that were more fool than himself and, if he met with such a one, to deliver it over to him. Not many years after, this lord fell sick, and indeed was sick unto death. His fool came to see him, and was told by his sick lord that he must now shortly leave him. "And whither wilt thou go?" said the fool. "Into another world," said his lord. "And when wilt thou come again, within a month?" "No." "Within a year?" "No." "When then?" "Never." "Never? And what provision hast thou made for thy entertainment there, whither thou goest?" "None at all." "No?" said the fool, "none at all? Here, take my staff. Art thou going away forever, and hast taken no order nor care how thou shalt speed in that other world, whence thou shalt never return? Take my staff; for I am not guilty of any such folly as this."¹

In the following words he seems to anticipate Bunyan's Vanity Fair: "There are two shops that get away all the custom from Truth: the shop of Vanity, the shop of Error: the one sells knacks and gewgaws, the other false wares and adulterates. Both of their commodities are so gilded and gaudy and glittering that all

¹ "The Blessings, Sins, and Judgments of God's Vineyard."

fools throng thither, and complain to want elbow room and strive who shall be first served." When he says, "God loveth adverbs, and cares not how good but how well," he makes even grammar to be witty. Here he presses the law into the service of humor: "Those that defer their gifts till their death-bed, do as to say, 'Lord, I will give thee something when I can keep it no longer.' Happy is the man who is his own executor." The experience of a life of checkered fortune and misfortune speaks in this other brief passage: "Temptations on the right side are most dangerous. How many that have been hardened with fear have been melted with honor."

VI. Thomas Fuller (1608-1661). The third in our group of preachers, Thomas Fuller, with his varied scholarship and marvelous memory deserves the eulogy of Coleridge when he credits him with "an equal superiority in sound, shrewd good sense and freedom of intellect." In his power to excite the sense and emotions of the marvelous, Coleridge put him next to Shakespeare, and a calmer critic, Henry Rogers, the essayist, is scarcely less enthusiastic in Fuller's praise. Mr. Rogers says:

He wrote like Jeremy Taylor, and Isaac Barrow, and Sir Thomas Browne, with a vigor and freshness, with a fertility of thought and imagery, and a general felicity of style, which, considering the quantity of his compositions and the haste with which he produced them, impress us with wonder at his untiring activity and preternatural fecundity. His quips and quirks, and wanton wiles—his jests, puns, *jeux d'esprit*, and sallies of playful banter—form a perpetual fund of amusement to all readers with a wit to be exercised, and a diaphragm to be tickled. Fuller is one of those *bona fide* humorists, almost, if not quite, peculiar to British literature, in whom depth of thought and feeling underlies a surging tide of fun and frolic.

To those who object that the quaint and often perverse conceits of Fuller divert attention from the serious truth with which he may be dealing, Charles Lamb replies that "upon most occasions it would have been going out of his way to have expressed himself not of them"; and perhaps Fuller himself might have retorted on his objector: "There are fools with little heads, and there are fools with big heads: in the one case there is no room for so much wit, and in the other case there is no wit for so much room." Thus, for example, he comments on Paul's well-known passage, "St. Paul saith, let not the sun go down on your wrath, to carry news to the antipodes in another world of thy revengeful nature. Yet let us take the apostle's meaning rather than his words, with all possible speed to depose our passion; not understanding him so literally, that we may take leave to be angry till sunset: then might our wrath lengthen with the days; and men in Greenland, where days last above a quarter of a year, have plentiful scope for revenge." There was no lack of seriousness in his purpose, and perhaps the arrow sped to the mark none the less surely for the gay color of the feather with which it was plumed. "You cannot repent too soon, because you do not know how soon it may be too late." "It is dangerous to gather flowers that grow on the banks of the pit of hell, for fear of falling in." "In the morning (when it groweth up) the flower is a lecture on Divine Providence. In the evening (when it is cut down) it is a lecture on human mortality." Chalmers' famous sermon on "The Expulsive Power of a New Affection" might have been suggested by "The best wedge to drive out an old love is to take in a new." Since it was first

uttered the world has not ceased to enjoy Fuller's exquisite thought: "God's children are immortal while their Father hath anything for them to do on earth." His epigram on the Negro, "God's image cut in ebony," has done infinite service in the cause of humanity; and not less happy is his praise of one of his friends, "He had, as I may say, a broad-chested soul, favorable to such who differed from him." The irrepressible humor of the man went with him to the last, and he was content that on his grave should be inscribed the two words, "Fuller's Earth." If Fuller occasionally failed to do justice to his own more serious strain let these two extracts show us how excellent that strain could be: Here is his comment on the text, "Teach me to number my days that I may apply my heart to wisdom":

Coming hastily into a chamber, I had almost thrown down a crystal hour-glass. Fear lest I had, made me grieve as if I had broken it. But, alas! how much precious time have I cast away without any regret! The hour-glass was but crystal, each hour a pearl; that but like to be broken, this lost outright; that but casually, this done willfully. A better hour-glass might be bought; but time lost once, lost ever. Thus we grieve more for toys than for treasure. Lord, give me an hour-glass, not to be by me, but to be in me. "Teach me to number my days." An hour-glass, to turn me, "that I may apply my heart to wisdom."

And here he sets in a new light our future hope:

Christ when on earth cured many a spot, especially of leprosy, but never smoothed any wrinkle, never made any old man young again. But in heaven he will do both (Eph. 5:27): when "he shall present to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." Triumphant perfection is not to be hoped for in the militant church; there will be in it many spots and wrinkles, as

long as it consisteth of sinful, mortal man. It is Christ's work, beyond the power of man, to make a perfect reformation.

VII. Thomas Adams (*b. 1585*). For richness of fancy the peer of these men was Thomas Adams, who spent his life, of which, however, little is known, in and around London ; preached often at Paul's Cross ; suffered in the times of the Commonwealth ; and living on into decrepit and necessitous old age, probably died before the restoration of Charles the Second. He is distinct from Donne, and Hall, and Fuller in that he is a Puritan to the core, but at the same time he resembles them in his loyalty to the monarchy. In common with many of the Puritans he is often fantastic in his treatment of his texts. Preaching on "Their poison is like the poison of a serpent, like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear," he makes his theme, *A Generation of Serpents*, and sketches eleven characters : The troublesome and litigious neighbor, the Salamander ; the angry man, the Dart ; the drunkard, the Dipsas ; the hypocrite, the Crocodile ; the courtesan, the Cockatrice ; the covetous earthworm, the Caterpillar ; the traitorous man, the Asp ; the sluggard, the Lizard ; the piot, or snake, akin to the tempter in Eden, the Sea Serpent ; the extortional, the Stellion or lizard ; and the great red dragon, Draco. It is the Puritan, again, that speaks in this quotation from his sermon on *The Spiritual Navigator* :

There be pirates in the sea, alas ! but a handful to that huge army of them in the world. Take a short view of them, borrowed of a divine traveler. Fury fights against us like a mad Turk ; fornication, like a treacherous Joab, in kisses it kills us ; drunkenness is the master gunner that gives fire to all the rest ; gluttony may stand for a corporal ; avarice for a pioneer ; idleness for a

gentleman of the company ; pride must be the captain. But the arch-pirate of all is the devil, that huge leviathan that takes his pastime in the sea. And his pastime is to sink merchants' freight that are laden with holy traffic for heaven. Historians speak of a fish that is a special and oft-prevailing enemy of the whale, called the sword fish. The most powerful thing to overcome this leviathan is the sword of the Spirit.

The poet is more apparent when he incites his hearers to be thankful by bidding them travel with David in the one hundred and forty-eighth Psalm, up into heaven and then down by the celestial bodies, sun and moon and stars, through fire and hail and vapor, even to the winds and storms fulfilling his will.

Fall in upon the center of the very earth, you shall hear the beasts and cattle, mountains and hills, fruitful trees and all cedars, extolling His name. The chirping birds still sing sweet anthems and carol to the Creator's name every morning when they rise, every evening when they go to rest. Not so much as the very creeping things, saith the psalmist, noisome dragons, and crawling serpents in the depths, but they do in a sort bless their Creator. Let not man, then, the first-fruit of his creatures, for whose service all the rest are made, be unthankful.

In aphorisms Adams is as rich as any of his contemporaries : "Not seldom a russet coat shrouds as high a heart as a silken garment. You shall have a petty cottage send up more black smoke than a goodly manor. It is not therefore wealth but vice that excludes men out of heaven." "There are some that 'kiss their own hands' for every good turn that befalls them. God giveth them blessings, and their own wit or strength hath the praise." The unstable man is "full of business at church, a stranger at home, a skeptic abroad, an

observer in the street, everywhere a fool." Of the tongue he says: "Because it is so unruly the Lord hath hedged it in, as a man will not trust a wild horse in an open pasture but prisons him in a close pound. A double fence hath the Creator given to confine it—the lips and the teeth—that through those bounds it might not break." Not without good reason Adams has been called the Shakespeare of the Puritans, and Hamlet himself might have soliloquized, as does he, on dust:

The matter of our substance, the house of our souls, the original grain whereof we were made, the life of all our kindred—the glory of the strongest man, the beauty of the fairest woman, all is but dust. Dust the only compounder of differences, the absolver of all distinction. Who can say which was the client, which was the lawyer; which the borrower, which the lender; which the captive, which the capturer, when they all lie together in blended dust?

VIII. David Dickson (*b. 1583*). In Scotland Puritanism had little humor, and what little it did have was somewhat grim, and such as may be found occasionally even in John Knox. To keep the faith was with men of the Covenanter type the earnest work of earnest lives. Such an one was David Dickson, of whom an English merchant who chanced to hear him wrote, "That man showed me all my heart." It was Dickson who contrary to the common Puritan practice of basing a score of sermons on one verse of the Bible generally took three or four verses for a single discourse.¹ "God's bairns," said he, "should get a good hunch of his own bread." To him preaching was the noblest of vocations, and when elected to the chair of divinity at Edinburgh and Glas-

¹ Dr. W. M. Taylor's "The Scottish Pulpit," p. 104.

gow successively he recalled the days in which he was simply pastor of Irvine, and declared "The professor of divinity at Edinburgh is truly a great man, the professor of divinity at Glasgow is a still greater man, but the minister of Irvine was the greatest man of all."

IX. Samuel Rutherford (*b. 1600*). The fiercest of controversialists, at the same time a son of thunder and consolation, the narrowest of sectaries, the wisest of counselors and the most faithful of friends, was Samuel Rutherford, whose self-assurance drew from Oliver Cromwell the memorable and well-merited remonstrance, "I beseech you in the bowels of Christ think it possible that you may be mistaken," and from John Milton a scathing sonnet directed against the men who "force our consciences that Christ made free."¹ Yet it is Rutherford who in his preaching showed that same merchant to whom reference has already been made "the loveliness of Christ," who left to us in his "Letters," the most precious volume in all the literature of pastoral consolation, and who when banished from his beloved parish of Anwoth envied the sparrows and swallows that built their nests there undisturbed. "Oh, if I might but speak to three or four herd-boys of my worthy Master, I would be satisfied to be the meanest and most obscure of all the pastors in this land, to live in any place, in any of Christ's outhouses." We may not pass judgment on these men from the calmer years in which our lot is cast. In the graves of the martyrs on the heathery "hills of home" which Robert Louis Stevenson prayed to see once more in dying, many of them rest to-day, but there was little rest for them while

¹ Dr. W. M. Taylor's "The Scottish Pulpit," p. 92.

the Stuarts were on the British throne, and the persecuting dragoons were harrying them from one hiding-place to another.

X. John Livingstone (*c. 1603-1661*). A wanderer abroad for many weary years, dying in exile, indeed, was John Livingstone, who when only twenty-seven years old preached at an open-air communion service in the parish of Shotts the sermon which lives forever in the annals of great religious quickenings. After a night spent in prayer and confession, and an early morning alone with God, Livingstone "went to service and got good assistance upon the points I had meditated on."¹ Some five hundred persons reached decision through that one discourse, and it was "the sowing of a seed through Clydesdale, so that many of the most eminent Christians of that country could date either their conversion or some remarkable confirmation of their case from this day."²

XI. Robert Leighton (*1611-1684*). If Rutherford erred by being too positive, to the opposite extreme ran the sweetest and saintliest of the Puritans, Robert Leighton. For his fidelity to his convictions his father's ears had been cropped, and his nose slit, he had stood in the pillory and languished in jail; and yet from the same ecclesiastical party which had treated his father so savagely Leighton accepted the first bishopric of Dunblane, and subsequently the archbishopric of Glasgow. It was probably in the hope that he might mediate between the factions of the church that he consented to wear these questionable honors, but at any rate they brought him to Scotland, and while "his bishopric was a blunder he came to a country which could appreciate

¹ Text, Ezek. 36 : 25, 26.

² Taylor, p. 108.

piety in a preacher." His pure and exalted nature shone as he preached. His very look, it was remarked by many who listened to him, was expressive of holy ardor and of tender piety. One of his hearers declared that at the distance of thirty years his image in the pulpit was clearly before his eyes. While so many of his contemporaries larded their discourses with classical allusions or pedantic phrases, Leighton's style is singularly simple, and while many more twisted and racked their texts for fantastic divisions, he held fast by the evident interpretation of the passage from which he was preaching. To this day his sermons can be read without difficulty, and his *Commentary on the First Epistle of Peter* is without a rival for unction and fervor. Carefully preparing for the pulpit, he did not read. To do so, he said was "unworthy of a man and much more of a father who may want vent indeed in addressing his children but ought never to want matter. Like Elihu he should be refreshed by speaking." Bishop Burnet, speaking from intimate acquaintance with Leighton, says :

He had the greatest elevation of soul, the largest compass of knowledge, the most mortified and heavenly disposition I ever yet saw in mortal ; he had the greatest parts as well as virtue, with the most perfect humility that I ever saw in man ; and had a sublime strain in preaching, with so grave a gesture, and such a majesty both of thought, of language, and of pronunciation, that I never once saw a wandering eye when he preached, and have seen whole assemblies often melt into tears before him.

With something of the ascetic and something also of the mystic in his nature, Leighton lived the life of one who is in the world and yet not of it, and aptly enough,

and in accordance with a wish of his own, died in an inn, a traveler to the end.

Beautiful spirit ! fallen alas !
On times when little beauty was ;
Still seeking peace amidst the strife,
Still working, weary of thy life ;
Toiling in holy love,
Panting for heaven above.¹

XII. Thomas Goodwin (*1600-1679*). It is in the richer vein of spiritual experience running through their sermons that Leighton and Rutherford differ from such brilliant preachers as John Donne and Thomas Fuller. This was also the distinctive glory of the English Puritans of whom we are now to speak. Thomas Goodwin, devoted by his parent to the work of the ministry, had been brought to conviction of sin and acceptance of pardon by an experience as powerful as it was personal. "This new sort of illumination," he says, "gave discovery of my heart in all my sinnings, searched the lower rooms of my heart, as it were, with candles, as the prophet's phrase is." Then followed the assurance of forgiveness, and he adds, "The weeds that entangled me in these waters I swam and broke through with as much ease as Samson did with his withes, for I was made vassal and a captive to another binding, such as Paul speaks of." Henceforward the ministry was his not as a profession, but as a vocation. His favorite model among the preachers of his university before had no charm for him now, and his eloquence, "the eminentest farrago of all sorts of flowers of wit that are found in any of the fathers, poets, histories, similitudes or

¹ Walter Smith.

whatever has the elegancy of wit in it," had no longer any attraction for Goodwin.¹ "I came to this resolved principle that I would preach wholly and altogether sound and wholesome words, without affectation of wit and vanity of eloquence." He remained true to his resolve. His sermons, which have frequently been reprinted, deal much with the religious affections and interpret Scripture in the light of personal feeling and conviction.

XIII. John Owen (*1616–1683*). More distinctly a theologian in his preaching was John Owen, from boyhood a student, at Oxford earning the reputation of a rare rabbinical and classical scholar, and in the estimation of Professor Jowett the greatest of all the deans of Christ Church College, which, however, refuses him a place in her portrait gallery because of his sympathy with the Commonwealth party in the Civil War. He preached before Parliament during that period, and Cromwell became his fast friend. Owen was all his life a close student, and his sermons are often too weighty and often too prolix for the ordinary pulpit; they suffer from the very fullness of the preacher, whose thought, while generally well arranged, rolls on in a strong deep flood, regardless of such minor considerations as time and space, by which alike the attention and the capacity of his hearers are naturally influenced. At times, however, he was simple and effective. His character and his theology were much admired. Andrew Fuller had a high respect for his character, and was much influenced by Owen's exegetical and theological works.

XIV. Richard Baxter (*1615–1691*). Richard Baxter

¹ See Brown, p. 105.

was not so carefully educated as Goodwin, nor was he so scholarly as Owen, but he made a far more powerful impression on his times than either of them, and remains to-day the best known of the Puritan preachers. His controversial writings, which were many and fierce, are of little interest. His dream of ecclesiastical comprehension has gone the way of many such visions. But the "Saint's Rest," the "Reformed Pastor," the "Call to the Unconverted," are among our classics. Those writings of his which, he says, were his chief labor are forgotten, while his sermons, which he calls his recreation, keep his memory green. It is not for their style that they are worthy of our study, for as such they are warnings rather than models. "I scarce," he confesses, "ever wrote one sheet twice over, nor stayed to make any blots or interlinings, but was fain to let it go as it was first conceived." In his autobiography he confesses that though in general he was a plain preacher, yet once a year he intentionally preached over the heads of his hearers to keep them humble and to let them see what he could do every Sabbath if he chose. There must, it seems to us, have been many a Sabbath in which only his blood earnestness saved his sermon from this perilous altitude. Of great length, with no perceptible sequence of thought, with minute divisions, and composed in a style which is rough and careless, his discourses are conspicuously marred by the blemishes common to so many of the Puritans. But these were only the defects of his excellences; and his biographer, Bates, says with truth: "He had a marvelous felicity and copiousness in speaking; there was a noble negligence in his style, for his great mind could not

stoop to the affected eloquence of words." Henry Rogers, one of the best of judges, considered that of the preachers of the seventeenth century, "Baxter possessed as largely as any those endowments which are essential to the best kind of popular eloquence." His ministry at Kidderminster, in the county of Worcestershire, England, was the scene of a pastoral triumph such as is rare indeed.¹ When he went there he found a town inhabited chiefly by weavers. The majority of them were "ignorant beyond the ignorance of their time, debased beyond its defilement, disorderly beyond its rudeness." The former vicar had been contemptible in attainments and scandalous in character. He and his curate were common tipplers. The curates in the next two parishes were grossly ignorant; one got his living by cutting faggots, and the other by making ropes, "their abilities being answerable to their studies and employment." To this place came Baxter, a man of infirm and broken health, the victim of no less than six and thirty doctors and their drugs, and an invalid who scarcely ever passed a working hour free from pain. But nothing could conquer his spiritual force. The pale and wasted recluse flung himself into his work. The large church soon became so full that gallery after gallery had to be added. The community was not only roused, but reformed. The whole town struck its arms and surrendered itself to the fervor of his preaching and the persistence of his pastoral labors. "When I came hither first," was his grateful record, "there was about one family in a street that worshiped God and called on his name; and when I came away there were

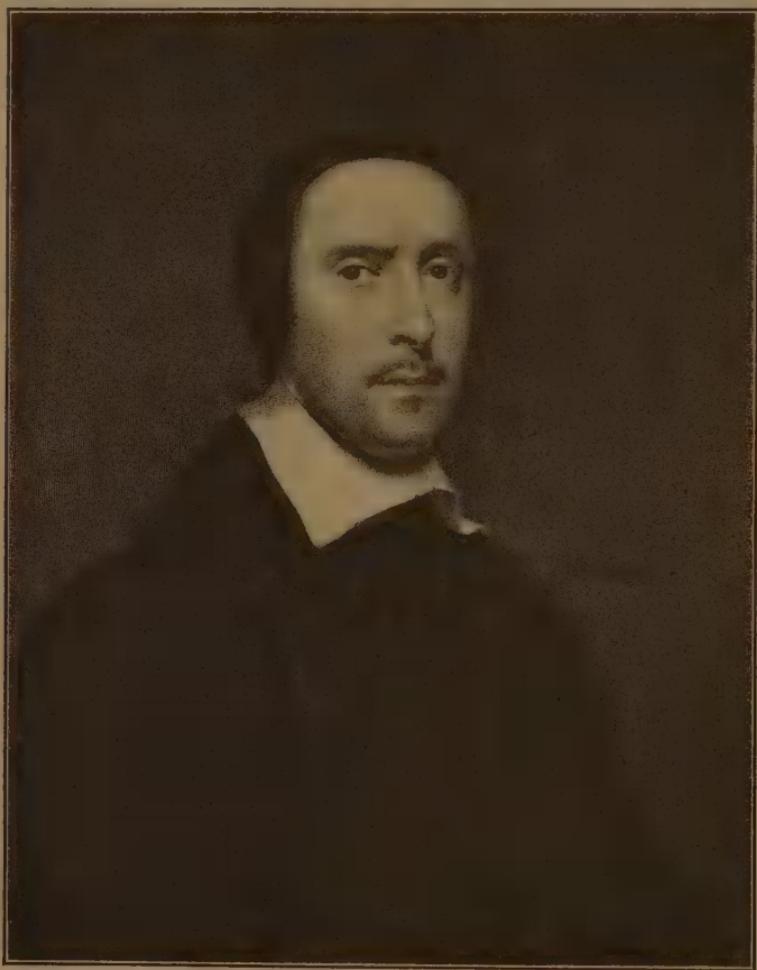
¹ Brown, p. 166.

some streets where there was not passed one family in the side of a street that did not do so, some of the poor men were so able in prayer that very few ministers did match them in ardor and fullness and apt expressions and holy oratory with fervency. The blameless lives of goodly people did shame opposers and put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, and many were won by their good conversation." In his last days Leighton said, "Were I again to be a parish minister, I would go to their houses, even to their ale houses." There spoke also the spirit of Baxter. "The work of Christ," says he, "is exceedingly retarded by an unworthy reticence. Christians live like snails in the shell, look but little around into the world, and know not the state of the world nor of the church, nor much care to know it, but think it is with all the world as they fancy it is with themselves." His intense earnestness found vent in passionate exclamations of sorrow, "O that heaven and hell should work in man no more! O that everlastingness should work no more!"

XV. John Bunyan (1628-1688). With a nature far sunnier and with a happier temperament John Bunyan had a zeal not unlike that of Richard Baxter. Each of them bore the impress of his time. "The Saint's Rest" is a marvelous picture to be painted by one whose ministry was broken into by politics and religious strife. "The Holy War" spiritualizes the experiences of the man who fought in the battles between Charles and the Commonwealth. If Baxter had few advantages in education, Bunyan had fewer. He wandered from village to village as a tinker, his swarthy face made swarthier yet by the smoke of his pitch kettle, and when he married he

could neither read nor write. Converted through an experience which had its Slough of Despond and its Valley of the Shadow of Death, he was twenty-eight before he ventured to preach, and then he did so to help others by the story of his own strange and awful journey from the City of Destruction to the Cross where his burden fell off and he was free. With tireless zeal he evangelized Bedfordshire and the neighboring counties. By and by, in London at daybreak crowds would gather to listen to the man whom they had learned to look up to as "Bishop Bunyan." One day's notice sufficed to gather such multitudes that the places of worship could not hold them. "At a lecture at seven o'clock in the dark mornings of winter," says one of Bunyan's contemporaries, "I have seen about twelve hundred; and I computed about three thousand that came to hear him on a Lord's day, so that one-half of them were obliged to return for want of room." When the restoration of Charles II. brought dark days of persecution for the Nonconformists of England, Bunyan was thrown into prison. But he preached there to all who could gain access to him, and the story runs that his jailer had such confidence in his honesty that he would often let him out to meet his congregation in the half-hidden dells and retired woods, where he would minister to them disguised as a carter, while scouts on the outskirts of the crowd kept watch against intruders. It was in vain that the magistrates offered him his liberty if he would abstain from preaching: "If you let me out to-day," said he, "I should preach to-morrow." He preached what he himself had tasted and handled of the word of life: "I verily thought and found by experience that what was taught me by the

word and Spirit of Christ could be spoken, maintained and stood to by the soundest and best established conscience." In his intense solicitude for souls, with a close grappling with conscience, with earnest strivings and prayers, and with absolute faith in the power of the gospel to save all who would believe, Bunyan differs not at all from Baxter. But he had what Baxter had not, an incomparable style; the noblest and purest Saxon ever used in the pulpit, and an imagination which places him beside Dante and Milton. That he made all these gifts, of which indeed he was apparently scarcely conscious, subservient to his one aim—"I have observed," he says "that a word cast in by the by hath done more execution in a sermon than all that was spoken besides"—only adds to the reality of his effects. As strongly as Martin Luther he impresses us with his sincerity. And with Bunyan, as with Luther, we are entertained with his homely humor, charmed with his shrewd motherwit, and touched with his wise and hospitable sympathy. It increases our admiration of the man when we reflect that living in an age of unparalleled literary profligacy, there is not a line in Bunyan's writings, and not a word in his sermons, which can be charged with coarseness. What Macaulay says of Bunyan as the author is equally true of Bunyan as the preacher: "No writer has said more exactly what he meant to say. For magnificence, for pathos, for vehement exhortation, for subtle disquisition, for every purpose of the poet and orator and the divine, the homely dialect is perfectly sufficient. No book shows so well (as '*Pilgrim's Progress*') how rich our language is in its own proper wealth, and how little it has improved by all it has borrowed." In his sermons



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his range of style is marvelous. Nothing can be more dramatic than the conception in "The Barren Fig Tree."¹ God comes to the chamber of the unfruitful Christian, and Death bearing an axe with which to cut the fig tree down, comes with him. The colloquy between them is as vivid and powerful as anything in dramatic literature, but although there are touches of grim humor there is no violation of taste, and the impression left is solemn and heart-searching. On the other hand, what can be sweeter than this comparison? "Christians are like the several flowers in a garden that have upon each of them the dew of heaven, which being shaken with the wind, they let fall their dew at each other's roots, whereby they are jointly nourished and become nourishers of each other."

In Bunyan's mind the preacher was never separated from the man. He is Evangelist, the guide of the weary and perplexed soul; he is Watchful, the porter of the Palace Beautiful, who bids the pilgrims welcome; he is the "grave person" whose picture in the Interpreter's house leaves us with so strong an impression of the solemnity of our vocation: "He had eyes uplifted to heaven, the best of books was in his hand, the law of truth was written upon his lips, the world was behind his back; he stood as if he pleaded with man, and a crown of gold did hang over his head."

XVI. Jeremy Taylor (1613-1679). With Bunyan the style was always subservient to the truth which it expressed. He had the Puritan solicitude to attain his end, if not the Puritan indifference to the means by which that end was reached. Of Jeremy Taylor the

¹ See "The Barren Fig Tree"; and "The Jerusalem Sinner Saved."

reverse is true. The son of a Cambridge barber, and a student of that university, he was still young when at the request of a college friend he preached at St. Paul's, London. The beauty of his appearance, the charm of his manner, and the eloquence of his language fascinated the congregation. This was some young angel newly descended from the visions of glory.¹ Laud, the all-powerful Archbishop of Canterbury, had only one complaint to make against him, and that was his youth. "Taylor humbly begged his grace to pardon that fault, and promised if he lived he would mend it." In his style he never outlived the affluence of his youth. It was rich and splendid to the end, and perhaps the variety and abundance of his illustrations can be traced in a measure to the very circumstances of his life, which was one of constant change and adventure. During the Civil Wars he stood by the royalist party. Expelled from his rectory, he became a chaplain to the army. We follow his varying course with difficulty. "Lying hid in retirement in the beautiful vale of Towy, in South Wales; imprisoned, promoted; at one time mingling with rough soldiers or rude villagers, at another with the band of elegant and learned cavaliers who sought the shelter of the Golden Grove; and all this with a keen eye for whatever could glitter in description, or melt into pathos, or draw the cords of persuasion—all life was made tributary to his genius; and air and earth and sea, and the habits and interests of men, and the stores and illustrations of ancient lore, seemed all to crowd their contributions into the exuberant treasure house of his eloquence." It was his checkered course

¹ R. A. Wilmott, "Bishop Jeremy Taylor."

that gave him many of his richest fancies. Not of nature alone, one may believe, but also of the experiences of his own life was he thinking when he said : “For so have I known the boisterous north wind pass through the yielding air, which opened its bosom, and appeased its violence, by entertaining it with easy compliance in all the regions of its reception. But when the same breath of heaven hath been checked with the stiffness of a tower, or the united strength of a wood, it grew mighty, and dwelt there, and made the highest branches stoop, and made a smooth path for it on the top of all its glories.” Still more do we seem to listen to his own hopes and faith in such fascinating words as these :

For so have I seen a lark rising from his bed of grass, and soaring upward, singing as he rises, and hoping to get to heaven, and climb above the clouds ; but the poor bird was beaten back by the loud sighings of an eastern wind, and his motion made irregular and inconstant, descending more at every breath of the tempest than it could recover by the vibration and frequent weighing of its wings, till the little creature was forced to sit down and pant, and stay till the storm was over, and then it made a prosperous flight, and did rise and sing as if it had learnt music and motion of an angel as he passed sometimes through the air about his ministries here below. So is the prayer of a good man.

Taylor is the poet of the pulpit, “a preacher who comes in state to the soul.” He might have been born in the Orient and reared in a garden of spices. “ His imagination is unsurpassed in richness and resource. Nature comes at his bidding and lays her treasures at our feet, and the dancing light he throws upon objects is like an aurora borealis playing betwixt heaven and

earth." The misfortunes of his life seem not to have soured his gentle spirit. The ascendancy of Cromwell drove him into exile and obscurity, the restoration of Charles II. cast its corrupting shadow over his own family, but the author of "Holy Living and Dying" was not easily dislodged from his confidence in the faithfulness and love of his heavenly Father. The touch of exaggeration in the panegyric of Doctor Rush when preaching Taylor's funeral sermon can be forgiven when we remember how rare were Taylor's accomplishments and how well he used them through a life of constant trouble and sorrow. "He had the good humor of a gentleman, the eloquence of an orator, the fancy of a poet, the acuteness of a schoolman, the profoundness of a philosopher, the wisdom of a chancellor, the sagacity of a prophet, the reason of an angel, and the piety of a saint. He had devotion enough for a cloister, learning enough for a university, and wit enough for a college of *virtuosi*, and, had his parts and endowments been parceled out among his clergy that he left behind him, it would, perhaps, have made one of the best dioceses in the world." The splendor of his style is apt to absorb so much of our attention that we fail to do justice to the higher qualities in his sermons. Coleridge says with much reason: "It is my full conviction that in any half-dozen sermons of Donne or Taylor there are more thoughts, more facts and images, more excitement to inquiry and intellectual effort than are presented to the congregations of the present day in as many churches or meetings during twice as many months." It is easy to criticise Taylor's composition. There may be in it "too much of the art of man and

too little of the heart of God." He is too apt to crust his page with jewels of quotations, to divert the mind from the main thought by obscure classical allusions, to prolong his sentences until the first word becomes hopelessly estranged from the last, but still it remains true that he is a dangerous model but a delightful companion, and his sermons a most inspiring and stimulating subject for the preacher's study. So much envy mars South's sarcastic sneer at Taylor's style that we almost resent the measure of truth that is in it :

"I speak the words of soberness," said St. Paul, and "I preach the gospel not with the enticing words of men's wisdom." This was the way of the apostle's discoursing of things sacred. Nothing here of "the fringes of the north star" ; nothing of "nature's becoming unnatural" ; nothing of the "down of angels' wings and the beautiful locks of cherubims" ; no starched similitudes introduced with a "Thus have I seen a cloud rolling in its airy mansion," and the like. No, these were sublimities above the rise of the apostolic spirit, for the apostles, poor mortals, were content to take lower steps and to tell the world in plain terms that he who believed should be saved and he who believed not should be damned.¹

That there was reason for South's caustic criticism is abundantly proved by whole pages of Taylor's sermons. This one example may suffice : "Every sinner that repents causes joy to Christ, and the joy is so great that it runs over and wets the fair brows and beauteous locks of cherubim and seraphim, and all the angels have a part of that banquet. Then it is that our blessed Lord feels the fruits of his holy death, the acceptation of his holy sacrifice, the graciousness of his person, the return of his prayers."

¹ "R. South's Sermons," Vol. IV., pp. 152, 153.

XVII. John Howe (1630-1705). While Jeremy Taylor was battling with the evil days in which his lot was thrown, a preacher of another type was acting as chaplain to Oliver Cromwell and casting longing glances at his old parish in the pleasant Devonshire town of Great Torrington. The fancy of John Howe was not indeed so exuberant as was Taylor's, but his imagination moved on loftier heights, and if his sermons did not sparkle with illustrations drawn from the field and the library yet in breadth of spirit and sublimity of conception they left the poet of the pulpit far behind. To-day you may still stand in the cramped vestry of the parish church of Great Torrington and remember that "from its dim shadows and scant span John Howe used to pass to that awful place, the pulpit." Through his friend, Edmund Calamy, we get a glimpse of what that place was to him. "He told me," says Calamy (he is speaking of fast days), "it was his common way to begin about nine in the morning with a prayer for about a quarter of an hour, in which he begged a blessing on the work of the day, and afterward read or expounded a chapter or psalm, in which he spent about three-quarters of an hour; then prayed an hour, preached another hour, and prayed again for half an hour. After this he retired and took a little refreshment for a quarter of an hour or more, the people singing all the while. He then returned to the pulpit, prayed for another hour, gave them another sermon of about an hour's length, and so concluded the service of the day, about four o'clock in the evening, with half an hour or more of prayer."

Howe is seen at his best in his discourses on "The

Living Temple" and in a sermon which is worthy of lasting remembrance, "The Redeemer's Tears Over Lost Souls." There is in him a mingling of culture and fervor which is all his own. He was a graduate of both universities. At Cambridge he was intimate with the Platonists, of whom Whichcote, Cudworth, Culverwell, John Smith, and Henry More were the chief,¹ men whose names need to be mentioned here because they modified the theology of the Puritans by an endeavor to unite philosophy and religion and undoubtedly made Calvinism more reasonable to the younger minds of England. Howe's practical pastoral experience saved him from becoming a mere dreamer, and his reverent study of the Bible as a preacher delivered him from the vagueness of thought and phrase in which many of the Cambridge students lost track alike of the times and of the truth. But his generous nature had much in common with their purity of life and broad charity, and his lofty soul sought the heights of holy speculation to which they also soared. He has sometimes been called the Platonic Puritan. He loved to speak of God in his being and nature and attributes, to trace the divine image in man and see it once more restored. Often he would follow trains of metaphysical thought which were more suitable to the chair of the philosopher than to the pulpit of the Christian preacher. At such times his style is, as Robert Hall objected, marred by an aptitude for discussing minute graces and proprieties, and his sentences are long and cumbersome. But for all this, Hall counted him "unquestionably the greatest of the Puritan divines," and the general judg-

¹ Brown, p. 114.

ment will not count his estimate exaggerated nor will it differ to any great extent from the conclusion of the historians of nonconformity.¹ "A young minister," they say, "who wishes to obtain eminence in his profession, if he has not the works of John Howe and can procure them in no other way should sell his coat and buy them, and, if that will not suffice, let him sell his bed too and lie on the floor, and if he spends his days in reading them he will not complain that he lies hard at night."

XVIII. Isaac Barrow (1630-1677). There is little that is inviting in the way in which one of the greatest masters of the English pulpit, a contemporary of Howe's, is introduced to our notice. Doctor Wilkins, of St. Lawrence, Jewry, in the city of London, was absent on one occasion from his pulpit and in his stead a stranger was to preach. "At the appointed hour a pale, meagre, unpromising-looking man made his appearance in the pulpit, dressed in a slovenly manner, with his collar unbuttoned and his hair uncombed. It so happened that an alarm of fire was raised and most of the congregation went away. The preacher, utterly unmoved by the commotion, gave out his text and went through his sermon to the two or three people present. Richard Baxter was one of those who remained. Some of the parishioners thought fit to call upon Doctor Wilkins to expostulate with him for suffering such an ignorant, scandalous fellow to have the use of his pulpit. Doctor Wilkins appealed to Mr. Baxter. Baxter had already told Wilkins that he had never heard a better discourse. He now declared that he could have sat and

¹ Bogue and Bennett.

listened all the day long. The grumblers, astonished at hearing this, changed their tone and confessed 'they did not hear one word of the sermon, but were carried to mislike it by his unpromising garb and mien, the reading of his prayer, and the going away of the congregation.' They even begged Doctor Wilkins to procure them the pleasure of hearing him preach again. But we are told that he could not by any persuasions be prevailed upon to comply with the request of such conceited, hypocritical coxcombs." The preacher was Isaac Barrow. Gifted with extraordinary bodily strength, and as a boy so much given to fighting that his father in despair wished that "if it pleased God to take away any of his children it might be his son Isaac," he became as remarkable for mental as he had been for physical resources. At nineteen he was a fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. His Arminianism alone blocked his appointment as professor of Greek five years later. He anticipated by a century or more the enthusiasm for scientific pursuits, and when he resigned the chair of mathematics it was to make way for his still more distinguished pupil, Isaac Newton. The story of his examination for ordination is without a parallel in the annals of that ordeal. The bishop who was to examine the candidates was old and probably indolent, and so he placed them in a row and asked three questions. First, "*Quid est fides?*" Barrow, near the end of the row, had time to think, and, when it came to his turn, answered, "*Quod non vides.*" "*Excellenter,*" said the bishop. To the second question, "*Quid est spes?*" he answered, "*Nondum res,*" and the old man cried, "*Excellentius.*" The third was, "*Quid*

est caritas?" and Barrow answered, "Ah, magister, *id est raritas.*" "*Excellentissime,*" shouted the bishop, "*aut Erasmus est, aut diabolus.*" Barrow was never settled over a parish, which accounts for the inordinate length of many of his sermons. Perhaps experience had taught him to doubt whether a second hearing would be granted to him. For the same reason his discourses are rather disquisitions than sermons and lack directness and close application. The story runs that the pulpit hour-glass, when he preached before the Lord Mayor of London, was thrice turned, with the remark, "Another glass." That sermon occupied three hours and a half. Some one asked him whether he was not tired. "Yes, indeed," said he, "I began to be weary with standing so long." But while he is copious, Barrow is not diffuse. Exhaustive of his subject and exhausting to his hearers he undoubtedly was, but the precision of the mathematician arranged his discourse and the taste of the student of the classics composed it. Charles II. charged him with being an unfair preacher because he left nothing for those who came after him. Lord Chatham, a century later, made him the model for his eloquence, and one of the first preachers of our own times speaks enthusiastically of "the matchless sermons of Isaac Barrow."¹ No doubt there were hearers in those times, as there would be now, who grudged him his rare powers of continuance, for Barrow's congregation was not apt to be Puritan in its patience any more than in its theology. Once when he went to preach in Westminster Abbey² "the dean told him not to be long; the abbey congregation liked short

¹ R. W. Dale.² E. P. Hood.

discourses and were used to them. Hereupon Barrow produced his sermon. The dean glanced over it and begged him to give them only the first part. With visible reluctance Barrow consented. It occupied one hour and a half. The dean's reason for preferring this request was that on a former occasion the congregation, wearied by the length of the discourse, began to disperse before its conclusion. The vergers, who received fees from visitors for showing them round the abbey at the close of the service, fearful of losing all their customers, induced the organist to strike up against him, and would not give over playing till they had played him down." One thinks it may have been when smarting at some slight passed by a frivolous court on his solid discourses that he breaks out thus :

If it is true that nothing has for you any relish except painted comfits and unmeaning trifles, that not even wisdom will please you, unless without its own peculiar flavor, nor truth, unless seasoned with a jest, nor reason, unless cloaked in fun, then in an unlucky hour have I been assigned as your purveyor, neither born nor bred in such a frivolous confectionary. The insatiable appetite for laughter keeps itself within no bounds. Have you crowded to this place for the purpose of listening and studying and making progress, or only for the sake of laughing at this thing and making a jest of that other? There is nothing so remote from levity which you do not instantly transmute into mirth and absurdity, and let a discourse be such as to move no laughter, nothing else will please, neither dignity, nor gravity, nor solidity, ; neither strength, nor point, nor polish.

Certainly the incessant student bent on redeeming the time speaks here :

If the water runneth it holdeth clear, sweet, and fresh ; but stagnation turneth it into a noisome puddle ; if the air be fanned

by winds it is pure and wholesome ; but from being shut up it groweth thick and putrid ; if metals be employed they abide smooth and splendid ; but lay them up and they soon contract rust ; if the earth be belabored with culture, it yieldeth corn ; but, lying neglected, it will be overgrown with bushes and thistles, and the better its soil is, the ranker weeds it will produce : all nature is upheld in its being, order, and shape by constant agitation ; every creature is incessantly employed in action conformable to its designed end and use ; in like manner the preservation and improvement of our faculties depend on their constant exercise. To it God hath annexed the best and most desirable rewards ; success to our undertakings, wealth, honor, wisdom, virtue, salvation ; all which, as they flow from God's bounty and depend on his blessing, so from them they are usually conveyed to us through our industry, as the ordinary channel and instrument of attaining them.

Charles II. was a bad king and a worse man, but he could appreciate a good sermon. It was he who in an order issued to the University of Cambridge forbade the supine and slothful practice of reading sermons ; and insisted that they should be delivered "by memory or without book." But the Restoration called for reforms more serious than these. The "disordered times" of the Commonwealth (to which Charles alluded in the same order) had broken up the parishes of England, ousting in many cases unworthy men from the pulpits, and for a brief season putting better in their stead.¹ But the reform was not uniform. The violent sectary often took the place of the scandalous liver, and the parish was little bettered by the change. Under Charles the old abuses came back, and the condition of the clergy was lamentable indeed. The preachers in the palace were oftentimes sycophants and place-hunters.

¹ See Macaulay, "History of England," Vol. II., Chap. 4, 6, 8.

They must consent to be blind to the shameless profligacy which faced them as they stood in the pulpit of the chapel royal. In the rural parishes preachers were few, the parson was very likely the fawning dependent on the local squire, the boon companion of his coarse revels, suffered to say grace at the dinner table, but expected to retire before the pudding came on, and rewarded for his servility by the hand of the lady's maid, a cottage which the farm laborer would not envy, and a pittance which was little better than beggary.

XIX. Edward Stillingfleet (*1635-1699*). In the pulpit the controversial spirit of the times found a voice in Edward Stillingfleet, who contended with Howe, on the one hand, and with the Romanists on the other. "Heard the famous young Stillingfleet," writes Pepys in his diary (April 23, 1665), "whom I knew at Cambridge, and he is now newly admitted one of the king's chaplains; and was presented, they say, to my lord treasurer for St. Andrew's, Holborn, where he is now minister, with these words: that they, the Bishops of Canterbury, London, and another, believed he is the ablest young man to preach the gospel of any since the apostles. He did make a most plain, honest, good, grave sermon, in the most unconcerned and easy yet substantial manner that ever I heard in my life, upon the words of Samuel to the people: 'Fear the Lord in truth with all your heart, and remember the great things that he hath done for you'; it being proper to this day, the day of the king's coronation."

XX. John Tillotson (*1630-1694*). The preacher who was even more highly thought of than Stillingfleet, was John Tillotson, who was a polemic also, but of a sweet

and conciliating spirit. Bred a rigid Puritan, he did not, as is often the case, turn against his old friends when he became a churchman. His sermons survive as models of easy grace; they are remarkable for their clear arrangement, and for practical common sense. He keeps the level road, a stranger to the heights where Jeremy Taylor treads with such delight, and to the heavenly prospects which Howe beholds from them. It is difficult for us to understand the estimation in which his preaching was held by his contemporaries. He was "not only the best preacher of the age," said Bishop Burnet, "but seemed to have brought preaching to perfection. His sermons were so well liked that all the nations proposed him as a pattern, and studied to copy after him." As great an authority as Dryden the poet owned "with pleasure that if he had any talent for English prose it was owing to his having often read the writings of the great Archbishop Tillotson."¹ Yet as we glance over the ten volumes in which these sermons have come to us to-day his themes lack living interest, and his pages have no glow. The fire in them, if fire there ever was, has died out completely.

XXI. Robert South (1638-1716). This is not true of Robert South, the most famous satirist in the annals of the British pulpit, and without doubt the preacher who more than any other combined vigorous intellect and vehement feeling. Charles was quick to recognize South's talent and to reward it.² The pulpit when he occupied it became the "coward's castle" from which, secure from interruption, and catching the audible

¹ De Quincey, "Works," Vol. X., p. 109.

² H. Rogers, "Essays," Vol. II., p. 245.

ejaculations of royal approval, he pelted the Puritans, and held "beggarly Cromwell" up to ridicule. A politician rather than a preacher, at such moments South prostitutes the pulpit and degrades his office. For the man it is hard to feel much love, although it is harder yet to refuse him a large measure of admiration. No doubt he had "more grit than grace," but of that grit he made admirable use. He dared to read prayers at Westminster on the day of the execution of Charles I., praying for his majesty by name. The texts for his sermons are often the only religious thing about them, but in the choice of texts he was masterly. Had he but followed his better self, his masculine sense might have served the English people nobly, and put him in command of the English pulpit. Doctor Phelps lays his finger on the fatal blot in South's character and preaching when he says :

What is it, then, that takes religious life out of so many of his sermons, and gives them the title which modern criticism has applied to them, of "week-day sermons"? Why are they read now as standards of literature, rather than of the evangelical life of the pulpit? Robert South was for more than fifty years contemporary with Richard Baxter. Why did South leave for posterity the sermon against Extemporaneous Prayer, and the sermon in memory of Charles I., the royal martyr of blessed memory, while Baxter left the "Saint's Rest" and the "Call to the Unconverted"? I answer, South was corroded by his enmity to Puritan fanaticism. His pulpit was eaten through by that dry-rot. South the preacher shriveled into South the courtier. The prince of preachers became the most servile of courtiers whenever he stood face to face with the reformatory spirit of the age. That spirit saluted him, and gave him his great opportunity ; and he rebuffed it with ridicule and invective. Thenceforth his eye was closed forever upon the future of England.

Turning to his sermons, it will be found that South's arrangement of his material is good. He prepares a strong, logical plan, and treats his subject thoroughly. Few have equaled and none excelled him in vigor of language, "pure, strong, unembarrassed." The same business-like impression which is made by his plan is made by his composition. Henry Rogers says truly :¹ "Of all the English preachers South seems to furnish, in point of style, the truest specimens of pulpit eloquence. His robust intellect, his shrewd common sense, his vehement feelings, and a fancy always more distinguished by force than by elegance, admirably qualified him for a powerful public speaker. His style is everywhere direct, condensed, pungent. His sermons are well worthy of frequent and diligent perusal by every young preacher." An American critic as judicial as Henry Rogers concurs in this high estimate :² "The intensity of feeling and thinking which burns throughout South's writings has no parallel in English theology. It resembles the unwearied fire of the epic poet." We have spoken of him as a satirist. Here is his sketch of the idolater : "That he (the idolater) should at length come to fawn upon his own dog, bow himself before a cat, adore leeks and garlic, and shed penitential tears at the smell of a deified onion." Thus he aims at the Puritan : "Piety engages no man to be dull, though lately, I confess, dullness with some is taken for a mark of regeneration." And again : "There be some who say study is unnecessary for a minister; they will preach only their own experiences. When such is the case the hearers will

¹ "Essays," Vol. II., p. 242.

E. P. Whipple, "Essays," Vol. I., p. 385.

quickly have more than sufficient experience of their confidence and ridiculous impertinence." Without the fear of Solomon before his eyes, he says: "Stripes and blows are fit to be used only on those who carry their brains on their backs"; while again, ignorance and incapacity, especially in the ministry, is the constant butt of his ridicule:

"Among those of the late reforming age," he says, "all learning was utterly cried down. So that, with them, the best preachers were such as could not read, and the ablest divines such as could not write. In all their preachments they so highly pretended to the spirit that they could hardly so much as spell the letter. To be blind was with them the proper qualification of a spiritual guide; and to be book-learned, as they call it, and to be irreligious were almost terms convertible. None were thought fit for the ministry but tradesmen and mechanics, because none else were allowed to have the spirit. Those only were accounted like St. Paul who could work with their hands, and, in a literal sense, drive the nail home, and be able to make a pulpit before they preach in it."

In a more serious mood he puts the same truth: "Solomon built his temple with the tallest cedars; and surely when God refused the defective and the maimed for sacrifice, we cannot think he requires them for the priesthood." The vigorous tonic of his robust common sense is caught in such a sentence as this: "Can they (the skeptics) imagine that the law of God will be baffled with a lie clothed in a scoff?" Politicians in any nation do well to lay to heart words so wise as these; "A blind man sitting in the chimney corner is pardonable enough, but sitting at the helm is intolerable." And in every age the enthusiast may learn how to guard against the extreme of fanaticism by heeding this warn-

ing, hidden though it be under a sneer at men better than was South himself: "Poor, self-deluding souls, often misapplying the blood of Christ under these circumstances, in which a little effusion of their own would more effectually work the cure, and Luke as physician give them a much speedier relief than Luke as evangelist." There are sentences in South's sermons which for beauty and force and directness have never been surpassed. Once heard they are ours forever: "Creation bends and cracks under the wrath of God"; "The broken and decrepit sensualist creeping, as it were, to the devil on all fours"; "The pleasures of an angel can never be the pleasures of a hog"; "A corrupt governor is nothing else than a reigning sin"; "Man," he is speaking of the heart, "little knows how much villainy lodges in that little retired room"—these are strong indeed. So for melody of language listen to these: "Perfect joy fills the soul as God does the universe, silently and without noise"; "Innocence is like polished armor, it both adorns and defends"; "Where do we find such rhetoric and poetry as in the Scriptures, or such pathos as in the lamentations of Jeremy? One would think that every word was the noise of a breaking heart." In all the literature of the pulpit there is no nobler English than South's sermon on "Man Created in the Image of God": "Certainly, that must needs have been very glorious, the decays of which are so admirable. He that is comely when old and decrepit surely was very beautiful when he was young. An Aristotle was but the rubbish of an Adam, and Athens but the rudiments of paradise."

When the seventeenth century closed the glory of the

English pulpit was for the time on the decline. It lived, indeed, rather in the after-glow of the great lights which had now almost without exception set. The prevailing tone in the Established Church was a decorous moderation. Tillotson and South left none to succeed them. In the Nonconformist churches the freer and more earnest preaching of the gospel which had distinguished Baxter and Bunyan was becoming a tradition. For a while the pulpit was timid and nerveless. The days of persecution and of strife had passed away, and with them, for the present, had passed the passion for witnessing for the truth, for which preaching was ordained by Jesus, and to which it had been devoted by his apostles.

IX

FRENCH PREACHERS OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

THE pulpit eloquence of France in the seventeenth century was distinguished by extraordinary richness of thought and splendor of diction. To the present hour the great sermons of that era remain the classics of the language. This was true chiefly of the Roman Catholic preachers, because they had every opportunity to train themselves for their vocation, and to be heard under the most favorable circumstances. With the Protestant preachers it was otherwise. They were never for any length of time free from persecution, and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685) drove them from their pulpits and their people, and condemned them to a life of exile. It will be remembered that the preaching orders of the Catholic Church, the Dominicans and the Franciscans, proposed to combat the heresies of the Albigenses and Waldenses. Persecution had failed to stamp them out. As early as the beginning of the thirteenth century the Catholic bishops in the South of France declared that such multitudes of the Waldenses were under arrest that it was not only impossible to feed them, but even to find lime and stone with which to build prisons for them.¹ The friars were directed to try another policy. Let them vanquish these heretics with their own weapons, and by means of preaching turn their guns against themselves. The

¹ Bompiani, "History of the Waldenses," p. 30.

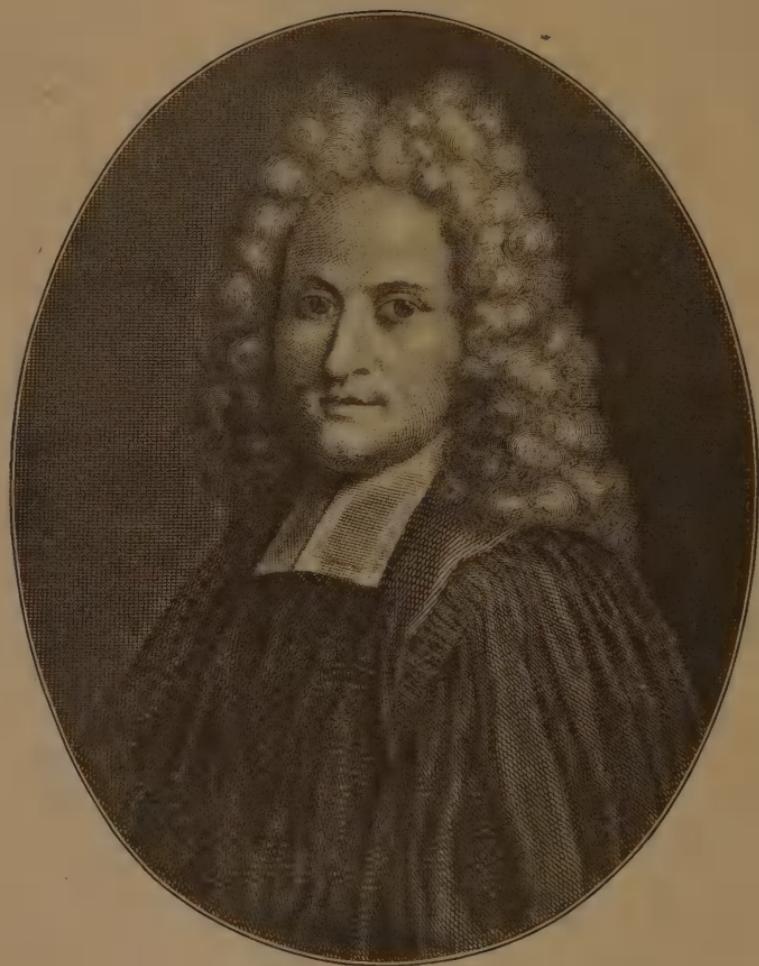
attempt was made, and Francis de Sales (1567-1622) was sent to Geneva to try and convert the reformer Beza to the Catholic religion. Although he did not succeed in this, he himself was a preacher of rare power. "His sermons were marked by great simplicity and persuasiveness." "The only real point of preaching," he said, "is the overthrow of sin and the increase of righteousness. A man may set forth his own learning and eloquence in a fine sermon, but the true sign of success is when his words induce people to leave off bad habits. My test of the worth of a preacher is when his congregation go away saying not 'What a beautiful sermon,' but 'I will do something.' "

The French Protestant preachers of the seventeenth century were worthy of the traditions which they inherited. To them belongs the precedence when we come to study the men of this brilliant period. The Waldenses and Albigenses by stimulating Dominic and Francis had created the orders of preaching friars, and now, almost five hundred years later, the preaching of the Reformed Church in France roused the Jesuits to encourage pulpit eloquence in the Catholic Church.¹

I. Claude (1619-1687). Among the Protestants that church found its ablest opponent in Claude. Carefully educated first by his father, who was also a minister, and then by himself during many studious years as the pastor of a small church, Claude passed by the way of a professor's chair to his true place as a center of influence in Paris. Now, at forty-two years of age, he was the recognized leader of the Reformed Church. Once already the government had acknowledged his ability by

¹ Ker, pp. 148, 149.

suspending him from preaching ; and Bossuet, the most brilliant of Catholic orators and “the most splendid polemic in France,” condescended to dispute with him on the relative merits of their churches. Claude played his part with such consummate skill that Bossuet said : “I feared for those who heard him.” But the current of royal patronage and popular feeling was running too strongly in favor of the Romanist party to be stemmed by the most eloquent and convincing advocate of the opposite faith. A century earlier the Protestants had accepted the protection of the great nobles of France, and allowed their highest interests to lie at the mercy of political leaders. Statecraft took the place of saintliness, and the patronage of the crown was more eagerly sought after than the approval of God. From that time on Protestantism declined. Many a nobleman who had been born and bred in the Reformed Church found it to his interest to turn Romanist. By the time Claude came to Paris the triumph of Catholicism was complete. In 1685 the Edict of Nantes, by which eighty-seven years before Henry IV. had given religious liberty to his people, was revoked by Louis XIV. Among those who were ordered to quit the country within twenty-four hours Claude was especially named. Bidding a touching farewell to his flock, he left France forever, and took refuge in Holland, where he preached occasionally at the Hague, and died an exile two years after. To Claude belongs the honor of redeeming the sermon, on the one hand, from the formal textual treatment which it had received from his Protestant predecessors, and, on the other hand, from the mere rhetorical display of the contemporary court preacher. He developed his theme



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from his text, and used synthesis to give effect to analysis. Only now and then does he allow himself to show much feeling. He is uniformly sensible, with more of authority than sympathy in his tone, and while lacking in imagination, the distinct advance in his thought, coupled as it was with a style pure and terse, gives to his sermons a rapidity of movement that saves them from dullness. Claude's "Essay on the Composition of a Sermon" was one of the earliest Protestant treatises on the subject.¹ It is responsible for bringing into existence a long succession of stiff and uniform sermon plans, and for training a multitude of preachers to eschew all rhetorical brilliance, a sacrifice which in the majority of cases called for no very large amount of self-denial.

II. *Du Bosc (1623-1692).* Far more brilliant as an orator than Claude was Du Bosc. Well-born and highly educated he carried himself with the ease which often comes to one reared in good society. He had many natural advantages too, a fine presence, a voice at once pleasant and powerful, a mind fertile in invention, rich in fancy, and trained to correct thinking. When he appeared before Louis XIV., in 1668, to plead for the rights of his fellow-religionists he made a profound impression on the king. Entering the queen's chamber, after he had listened to Du Bosc's appeal, the king said: "Madame, I have just listened to the best speaker in my kingdom," and to his courtiers he added, "Certainly, I never heard any one speak so well." Du Bosc was throughout the active years of his ministry a pastor at Caen in Normandy, whence Paris tried in vain to allure him.

III. *Saurin (1677-1730).* The greatest of the French

¹ Claude's "Essay," with Introduction by Robert Robinson.

Protestant preachers of the seventeenth century was Saurin. He was only a child when the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes drove his father, who was a lawyer, famous for the grace of his style, to Geneva. In that city, which had been for two hundred years the capital of the Protestant world, young Saurin was educated. Under William of Orange he fought as a volunteer against Louis XIV., and returning to Geneva when the war was over, his oratory even as a student drew so large a crowd to hear him that on one occasion it was necessary to open the doors of the cathedral. Five years were passed in London ministering to a small company of refugees, and in the zenith of his power he settled at the Hague, the little capital of Holland, the country which has so often sheltered and nourished distinguished religious exiles.¹ His preaching was extremely popular. "Places in his church were engaged a fortnight in advance by the most distinguished persons, and people climbed up on ladders to look in at the windows. The famous scholar Le Clerc long refused to hear him, on the ground that a Christian preacher should have nothing oratorical, and that he distrusted effects produced rather by a vain eloquence than by force of argument. One day he consented to go, on condition that he should sit behind the pulpit, so as not to see the oratorical action. At the end of the sermon he found himself in front of the pulpit, with tears in his eyes." No sermons better bear the trying ordeal of translation, and Saurin has been singularly fortunate in his English translator, Robert Robinson, himself the master of a style admirable for its clearness and force. Saurin was an orator.

¹ Broadus, p. 179.

He understood how to use dramatic effect. He excelled in impassioned appeal, in startling apostrophe, in animated dialogue. Less formal than Claude, with a preference for his topic rather than for his text, he is not so logical or orderly in the arrangement of his thought. He addresses the passions, but speaks too little to the will, and has more emotion than unction. His Calvinism obliged him to think, and gave solidity to his matter ; his oratorical instincts made his theology glow with a fire to which on the lips of his predecessors it had often been a stranger.

"In the introduction of his sermon," says Robert Robinson, who declared that "had he an oracle in religion Saurin would be the man," "he used to deliver himself in a tone modest and low ; in the body of the sermon, which was adapted to the understanding, he was plain, clear, and argumentative ; pausing at the close of each period, that he might discover by the countenances and motions of his hearers whether they were convinced by his reasoning. In his addresses to the wicked, Saurin was often sonorous, but oftener a weeping suppliant at their feet. In the one he sustained the authoritative dignity of his office ; in the other he expressed his Master's and his own benevolence to bad men, 'praying them in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God.' In general, his preaching resembled a plentiful shower of dew, softly and imperceptibly insinuating itself into the minds of his numerous hearers, as the dew into the pores of plants, till all the church was dissolved, and all in tears under his sermons."

Geneva, the early home of Saurin, did not retain its hold on the theology so closely associated with its early greatness. Alike in Switzerland and in France the preaching in the Reformed Church by and by lost its fervor. It became hard and cold. A hundred years and more had to pass before there was any stirring of

life in the dry bones of the Protestant pulpit. In Switzerland the Reformed Church needed to be herself reformed. Some of the best known Protestant preachers of the last century were found outside her ranks. Such were Cæsar Malan (1787-1864), and Louis Gaußen (1790-1863), the champions of a return to the simple teaching of the word of God; and the historian of the Reformation, Merle d'Aubigné (1794-1872); and more notably still, Alexandre Vinet (1797-1847), "that ugly man who becomes beautiful when he speaks," as a lady who listened to him said. A professor of rare attractiveness, a writer always loyal to his one motto, "Let us write in the best manner possible," Vinet was pre-eminently a preacher who used a style of translucent purity to clothe profound thought. His appeal was to the conscience; his faith in the response of the soul to the voice of its Lord was intense, and the emphasis of his preaching is seen in his own words: "The gospel is believed when it has ceased to be to us an external and has become an internal truth, when it has become a fact in our consciousness. Christianity is conscience raised to its highest exercise."¹

France has been indebted to Switzerland for two of the noblest preachers among the men who during the last one hundred years have given distinction to the Protestant pulpit. The first, Adolph Monod (1802-1885), one of a remarkable family of brothers, was born at Copenhagen, but his father was a Swiss, the descendant of religious refugees and himself a minister with a reputation for facile eloquence.² Adolph

¹ Alexandre Vinet, "Vital Christianity."

² E. de Pressensé, "Contemporary Portraits."

studied in Geneva, settled at Lyons, ultimately separated from the old Reformed Church, and, after some years, became minister of the principal Protestant church in Paris. From a somewhat rigid and narrow system of doctrine, he advanced to a faith not less fervent but more in sympathy with the age to which he spoke. The fire and brilliancy of his earlier days was not lost because tempered by experience; he was the acknowledged leader of sound Protestant thought in France, and one of the most ardent advocates of evangelical alliance among all ranks of Christendom. His preaching was in the true sense Christological. "The more truly great a soul is," he says,¹ "the more will it be prepared, all other things being equal, to receive Jesus Christ. There is no soul which has not in it the elements of greatness, since all were made by God, and made in his own image. It is only the petty in us that is against Jesus Christ, all that is great in us is on his side." "In the reason, the heart, the conscience, the imagination, the current that bears us away from Jesus Christ is superficial, troubled, polluted; while that which draws us to him is deep, quiet, and pure." On the last Sunday of his earthly life, he said, "I have only strength enough left to dwell upon the love of God. God has loved us; this is the whole doctrine of the gospel. Let us love God, this is the whole of its morality."

Switzerland also returned to France one of her greatest preachers in Eugene Bersier (1831-1889), whose forefathers had been driven out by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Making his way to the pulpit through great hardships, he persistently refused to ac-

¹ "Les Grandes Ames," pp. 42, 43.

cept the subsidy which in his day the French government gave to the Protestant Established Church. By his devoted pastoral labors, his rare administrative powers, but more than all by his powerful preaching, Bersier created a flourishing church of his own and became famous in Paris as a pulpit orator of the highest rank.¹

While France has to thank Switzerland for many of her most notable Protestant preachers, she owes a debt of gratitude to England for another quickening influence, the McAll Mission. Robert W. McAll (1820-1893), was the son of a preacher in his day famous for his rhetoric, but his own fame rests on something more enduring than the transient reputation of a pulpit orator. At the age of fifty he left his village pastorate in England and devoted himself to evangelistic work in Paris. The appeal to believe on Jesus Christ and to accept him was found not more in the sermon (which was indeed only a brief address), than in the sweet music, the informal character of the worship, and the hearty welcome given to every one present. From a very humble beginning in Paris in 1871, the McAll Mission grew in a quarter of a century until in one year it reported a million hearers in its halls and ten thousand scholars in its Sunday-schools. The movement deserves notice in the history of preaching, because like much of the earliest and most effective mission work of the Christian church, it depends not on excellency of speech or of wisdom but only on the demonstration of the Spirit, and the simple preaching of Jesus Christ and him crucified.

To the French Protestant preachers of the seventeenth

¹ "The Eugene Bersier Pulpit," J. F. B. Tinling.

century we have given the place due to the descendants of the men whose zeal called forth Dominic and Francis, and stirred up the Church of Rome to found the orders of preaching friars. But if as an art preaching has never in any other age been carried to such perfection as it was in France during the seventeenth century, the art must be sought for among the priests of the Catholic Church. There were many causes to account for this. The Protestant Reformation and the reaction from it had brought theological questions to the front ; the two most powerful ministers of France, Richelieu and Mazarin, were ecclesiastics, and aimed to check the power of the landed aristocracy by the ascendancy of the church ; and, more than all else, Louis XIV., while a far greater monarch than Charles II. of England, so far resembled him that he made up for the shameless profligacy of his life by the excessive orthodoxy of his doctrine, and the genuine pleasure which he had in listening to sermons. There came then a set in the tide of affairs toward the pulpit, and the court at Versailles was as distinguished as was the court in London for the brilliant men who won renown as preachers. We have seen that in England in the time of Queen Elizabeth there were many great men but few great preachers. In France, on the contrary, while Louis XIV. was on the throne, there were in the royal pulpit many great preachers but few great men. There can be no question as to the immense fascination of Louis XIV. He began his reign when only a child, and up to the last hour of his life he seems to have inspired all who came within the circle of his influence with a loyalty for his person and authority as sincere as it was enthusiastic. "If I am permitted

to see God," said the saintly Fénelon on his death-bed, "I shall constantly ask his mercies for him." Louis "was the object of a stupendous system of worship. Birth and rank and beauty and wit were all offered up to him to be enjoyed, and begged permission to adore him. He was the ruler of kings. The narrative of the ceremony of his dressing himself in the morning is as long as the Gospel of St. John."¹ It is likely that Louis was never so true to his real self as when he was listening to preaching ; and the preaching which he loved was not only brilliant in fancy and eloquent in language, but it was preaching which appealed to the conscience, and insisted on cleaner manners and better lives. It is creditable to the men who occupied the chapel royal that they were so far faithful to their hearers as their sermons show them to have been ; while it is little to be wondered at that they were not more so.² What Robert Robinson says of Flechier was no doubt in a measure true of all these men : "He was a very good man when he was not ordered to be wicked." When Massillon was complimented on his court sermons, he exclaimed : "When one approaches the avenue at Versailles he feels an enervating atmosphere."

The sermons to which Louis and his court listened were finished compositions, every word of which had been carefully chosen. They were often repeated, as a play might be, at the royal command. On their way to the chapel the connoisseurs of oratory would discuss the probable character of the gestures, the rhythm of a

¹ Hannay, "Satire and Satirists," p. 119.

² Sainte-Beuve, "Monday Chats." J. Breck Perkins, "France Under Louis XV.," Vol. I., pp. 13, 480.

sentence, even the pronunciation of a word; and returning they would still the whispers of conscience by playing the critic on the performance at which they had been present. Too often even feeling itself was more sentimental than real, and we understand the artificial atmosphere of the court when we hear Massillon in the royal chapel at Versailles repeating his funeral oration for Louis XIV. at the bidding of his successor, and doing so with such effect that the king, on this second time of listening to it, was once more violently affected, his countenance changed, he covered his face with his trembling hands, while the sobs of the assembly made it for some instants impossible for the preacher to proceed, and even he himself seemed to be more affected than all the court.¹

It is then for their skillful construction that these sermons are so worthy of our study. Everything is aimed at effect. The margin of the medieval sermon by a popular preacher had such directions as "cough here," "sit down," "stand up," "mop your face here," "now shriek like a demon." On the mental margin of many a court sermon of this period in France there must have been stage directions also. Too often the rhetoric is intensely self-conscious. It lays itself out to attract our notice and bids openly for our praise. The introduction is composed with a view to arrest and strike attention; instead of the divisions paragraphs are substituted and the peroration often closes quietly rather than with some sensational effect such as a less masterly preacher would employ.

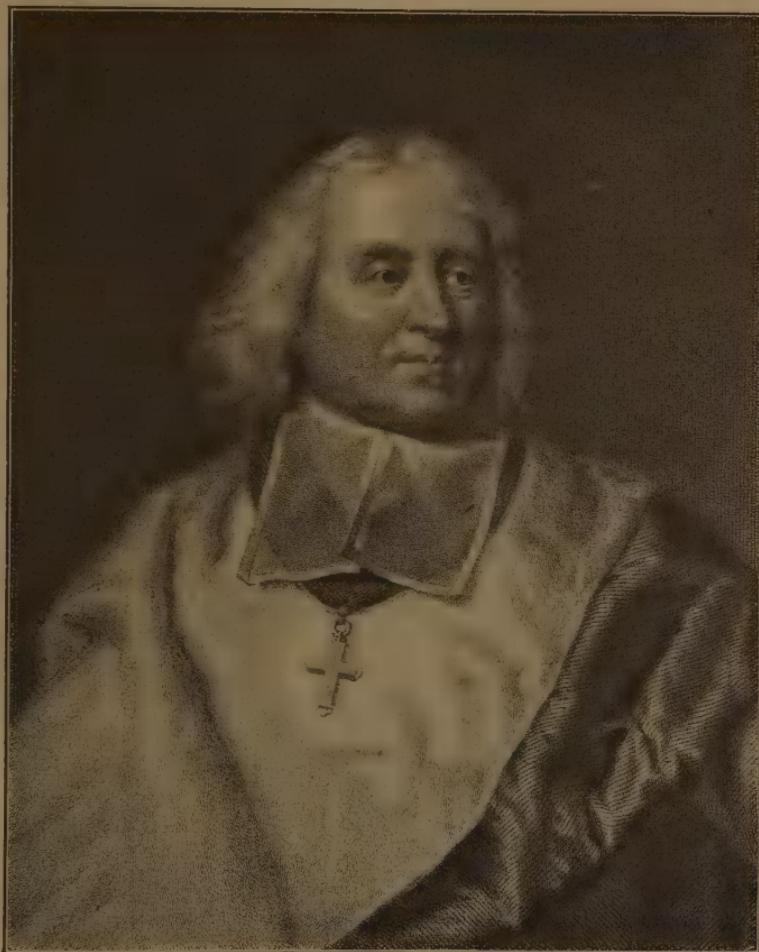
Our own colder oratory shrinks from the apostrophe

¹ Alexander, "Thoughts on Preaching," p. 414.

and the exclamation. The French do not. Listen to Bourdaloue as he appeals to the Holy Spirit:¹ "And you, O Spirit of my God, fountain of all grace, author of all holiness, come! enlighten and strengthen us. Come! sanctify this house, which is devoted to you, and which would not be governed but by you, because any other spirit but you would not keep up the regularity, harmony, and perfect charity, which have always maintained the peace of God in it." Turn to Bossuet's oration for Henrietta of England, daughter of Charles I., for an example of exclamatory oratory: "Oh! ever memorable, disastrous, terrific night! when consternation reigned throughout the palace; when, like a burst of thunder, a despairing voice cried out, 'The princess is dying—the princess is dead!'" "At this sentence," we are told, "the orator was obliged to stop, the audience burst into sobs, and the preacher was interrupted by weeping."

IV. Bossuet (1627-1704). In this group of French Catholic preachers of the seventeenth century the priority is accorded to Bossuet, to whom if we reckon by age it certainly belongs. Bossuet was born in a scholarly atmosphere where books were his earliest playthings. One day he discovered a copy of the Bible, which opened at Isaiah. The boy was fascinated by its sublime poetry. Breaking in on the conversation of his father and uncle, who were talking politics, he begged them to listen, and they sat half awestruck as he read chapter after chapter. Thus early the orator in him was aroused. At sixteen, while still a student in a Jesuit college, his eloquence attracted the notice of his

¹ Bourdaloue, "Sermons for Sundays and Festivals," p. 66.



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friends and acquaintances. Before long Paris was thronging the churches where he was expected to preach, and the story goes that one of his admirers boasting at court that the boy could be trusted to stand the test of being summoned from his bed at a few moment's notice to speak on a subject then given to him for the first time, young Bossuet was tried by that ordeal and triumphed. What is certain is that he was proof against the perils of an early and unnatural popularity. Origen and Augustine, and even more than they, Chrysostom, were his favorite models. At the theatre he endeavored to catch dramatic effects from Corneille. From Homer and Thucydides he learned to be vivid and strong; and the Old Testament continued to furnish him with examples of pathos and sublimity. Sometimes he preached from a brief, but more frequently memorized what he had written.¹ His preaching grew from the days of his ministry at Metz when it was emphatic and thorough, but marred by too great length and by a certain stiffness, to its climax, which was reached in Paris, where it touched the loftiest point for strength and sublimity mingled with pathos; and then, finally, as Bishop of Meaux advancing years brought to him some diminution of vigor, although to the last he was still orderly and finished. Our admiration for Bossuet as a man would be greater had he not been so fierce a controversialist and so merciless a persecutor of the Protestants, a course which provoked Robert Robinson into characterizing him as "a monster of all sorts of dissimulation, duplicity, and treachery, with a heart cased with inhumanity, and a front covered with brass." This is

¹ See "Bossuet and His Contemporaries."

intemperate and it is untrue. No doubt he was as Hallam the historian says : "The Eagle of Meaux, lordly of form, fierce of eye, terrible in his beak and claws." No doubt, also, in his rhetoric he was too much of the artist and too little of the orator. Julius Hare is right in speaking of Luther as almost as superior to Bossuet as Shakespeare is to Racine ; and in adding, "in fact, when turning from one to the other I have felt at times as if I were passing out of a gorgeous crowded drawing-room, with its artificial lights and dizzying sounds, to run up a hill at sunrise." But, on the other hand, Bossuet at his greatest is very great. His aim is to appeal through dogma to conscience. He moves the passions, but not without mastering the will. Of his funeral orations, that peculiar branch of oratory in which the French excel, as true a man as Robert Hall declared, "I never expect to hear language like that till I hear it from seraphs round the throne of God. Criticism indeed is forced to acknowledge them unapproachable."

Bossuet must be judged by the standards of his time and nation, and Lamartine's description of him is no doubt substantially correct. He pictures him with "an air of imposing authority, celebrity which commands respectful attention, episcopal rank which consecrates, age which gives holiness of appearance, genius which constitutes the divinity of speech, reflective power which marks the mastery of intelligence, sudden bursts of eloquence which carry the minds of listeners by assault, poetic imagery which adds lustre to truth—a deep, sonorous voice which reflects the tone of the thoughts, silvery locks, the paleness of strong emotion, the pene-

trating glance and expressive mouth ; in a word, all the animated and well-varied gestures which indicate the emotions of the soul. And what a voice,

a voice which is never hoarse, broken, soured, irritated, or troubled by the worldly and passionate struggles of interest peculiar to the time ; a voice which, like that of the thunder in the clouds, or the organ in the cathedral, has never been anything but the medium of power and divine persuasion to the soul ; a voice which only speaks to kneeling auditors ; a voice which speaks in the name of God, an authority of language unequaled upon earth, and against which the lowest murmur is impious and the smallest opposition blasphemy.

V. Bourdaloue (*1632-1704*). For his successor as court preacher, Louis Bourdaloue, we are able to feel an affection which Bossuet neither commands nor encourages. His rise was almost as rapid as that of Bossuet ; but the court had for him little fascination, and to political intrigue he never condescended to lower himself. In the end, retiring from the pulpit, he devoted his strength to works of charity, and especially to visiting the hospitals and prisons. As a preacher he was less dogmatic than Bossuet but more logical. What he lacks in grace he makes up in masculine directness. With fruitless compassion and transient remorse his hearers were only too familiar : " My design," he says, " is to convince your reason." He won the ear of his audience by encouraging them to think rather than to feel. His appeal was to truth and righteousness ; and he was "the preacher of morality addressing himself to reason."¹ His portrait still preserves for us the peculiarity of his appearance in preaching, and that was the half-closed eye.

¹ Phillips Brooks.

Only now and again, but then with great effect, was the eye opened to its full power. The impression which he left when he had concluded his discourse was that, great as an orator, he was greater yet as a minister of God. "The preacher," said Louis XIV. after one of Bourdaloue's boldest and most personal sermons, "has done his duty; it is for us to do ours." It was Bourdaloue and not Bossuet, who dared to picture the adulterer, and then turn to the king with the cry of Nathan to David, "Thou art the man"; and it was he who in an interview to which he was summoned afterward, could press home his appeal to the king with the words, "May God in his infinite mercy grant me to see the day when the greatest of monarchs shall be the holiest of kings."

For forty years Bourdaloue sustained his reputation as for all congregations the greatest preacher of his age. The court flocked to hear him, and yet the peasants in the village declared, "We understood all that he said." Let the news that Bourdaloue was to preach be spread through any city or town in France, and "mechanics left their shops, merchants their business, the lawyers their court house, and the doctors their patients." "*Le prédicateur des rois, et le roi des prédicateurs,*" was his title to the last—"The preacher to kings, and the king of preachers."

VI. Flechier (1632-1710). Born in the same year as Bourdaloue, Flechier, after teaching rhetoric and acting as tutor in various noble families, began to preach in Paris and attracted immediate attention. His style, while not so sublime as that of Bossuet, or so earnest as that of Bourdaloue, or so impressive as that of Mas-

sillon, excels them all in harmony ; and in the troublous times when he lived he preserved what is better than harmony in sentences, peace between rival parties in the kingdom, and, as much as any one man, assuaged the bitterness of the conflict between the Roman Church and the Reformers. Flechier's funeral orations show him at his best.¹

VII. Fénelon (1651-1715). One of the most picturesque figures of the court of Louis is that of François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon. A younger son by the second marriage of a noble of Gascony, Fénelon was adopted by an uncle who recognized the boy's abilities and determined that he should enter the priesthood. At his uncle's house near Paris he met Bossuet, who for ten years gave him the benefit of his friendship and counsel. When introduced to Louis and his court, Fénelon preserved absolute purity of life, provoking the special hatred of the Archbishop of Paris, a man of scandalous immorality, but attracting a host of friends, by the charm of his manners as well as by the grace of his style and the higher gifts of his mind and heart. He was made tutor to the petted grandson of Louis, and won the love of a boy so impetuous that he would try to break the clocks when they struck the hour that called him to an unwelcome task, and would fall into a fit of ungovernable fury against the rain when it interfered with his pleasures. That educational allegory "*Télémaque*," which has been associated with Fénelon's name in the minds of generations of schoolboys, was written for the benefit of his royal pupil. Its fearless portrayal of some of the king's weaknesses gave dis-

¹ Blouet, "French Sacred Oratory."

pleasure at court, and cost Fénelon his position. He retired to his archbishopric of Cambrai at forty-four, and there he spent the rest of his life, surrounded by a circle of devoted friends, devoted to the poor and miserable, and indulging in the speculations of mysticism to which he had always been attracted. Of all the brilliant preachers of that age Fénelon impresses us the most with his spirituality. His enlightened judgment revolted against the persecutions of the Protestants. On one occasion when appointing him to lead a crusade of conversion against the heretics, Louis insisted that a regiment of guards should accompany him. "The ministers of religion," said Fénelon, "are the evangelists of peace; and the military might frighten all, but they would not persuade one. It was by the force of their morals that the apostles converted mankind; permit us, then, sire, to follow their example." "But, alas!" said the king, "have you nothing to fear from the fanaticism of those heretics?" "I am no stranger to it, sire, but a priest must not let fears like these enter into his calculation; and I take the liberty of mentioning again to you, sire, that if we would draw to us our diffident brethren, we must go to them like true apostles. For my own part, I had rather become their victim than see one of their ministers exposed to the vexations, the insult, and the almost necessary violence of our military men."

Few of his sermons remain, but those are of a high order. The ideal preacher, it was said, "should think like Pascal, write like Bossuet, and speak like Fénelon." In preaching it was his habit to use a carefully prepared plan. As much as Bourdaloue he would have

insisted, "I can forgive a bad sermon, sooner than I can forgive a bad outline." Saint-Simon describing Fénelon writes: "He was a tall, thin man, of a goodly shape, with a big nose, eyes through which the mind poured in a torrent, and a countenance of which I never saw the like, and which, once seen, was never forgotten. It blended every quality, even the most opposite. It had gravity and gallantry, seriousness and gayety; in it you were aware of doctor, bishop, and fine gentleman at once: what was most conspicuous in it, as in his whole person, was thought, wit, the graces, decorum, and above all, nobility. It required an effort to cease looking at him." Yet Fénelon no doubt shared with other court preachers the disheartening conviction that not to hear him so much as to be in the fashion were many of his hearers present. On one occasion the king was astonished to find only Fénelon and the priest at the chapel, instead of a numerous congregation as usual. "What is the reason of all this?" said the king. "Why," replied Fénelon, "I caused it to be given out, sire, that your majesty did not attend chapel to-day, so that you might know who came to worship God, and who to flatter the king." There was another time, if the story be true, when Fénelon himself was hoist with his own petard. When he was in attendance on Louis XIV., at a sermon preached by a Capuchin, he fell asleep. The Capuchin perceived it, and breaking off his discourse, said "Awake that sleeping abbé, who comes here only to pay his court to the king"; a reproof which Fénelon often related with pleasure after he became Archbishop of Cambrai.

VIII. Massillon (1663-1742). Massillon was the

preacher of this famous group that delivered Advent and Lent sermons before Louis XIV., but was never appointed court chaplain again, to whom the court showed little favor, and that was not patronized by the Jesuits then in power. All this may have been to Massillon's credit, and certainly nothing can rob him of his position as the preacher with the purest style and the widest range. Saintsbury says:¹ "Massillon has usually and justly held the position of the greatest preacher in the strict sense of the word of France. His early style was formed on Bourdaloue, but while, in common with Bourdaloue, he impresses us with reserved force, he is more pathetic, and, unlike Bourdaloue, while he united strength and beauty, with Massillon beauty predominated." He speaks to the heart, and engages the intellect through the passions; he is "the interpreter of the religious instincts speaking to the heart."² There were times when he could be extremely impassioned, although this mood was not usual with him. His sermon on "the small number of the elect" affected his hearers in a way which recalls the scenes that often accompanied the preaching of Jonathan Edwards. When he exclaimed: "Withdraw now these four classes of sinners from this congregation, for they will be withdrawn from it at the great day. Stand forth now, ye righteous! Where are ye? Remnant of Israel, pass to the right! Wheat of Jesus Christ, separate yourselves from the chaff destined for the everlasting burning! O God, where are thine elect!" hundreds rose up, with horror and despair painted on their counte-

¹ "Short History of French Literature," pp. 384, 385.

² Phillips Brooks.

nances, and the preacher himself overcome by emotion was obliged to stop. As a rule, Massillon had himself completely under control, and his voice, which was clear and melodious, excelled in low, sweet notes. But now and again he would startle his audience with piercing cries, and fill them with awe and terror by his shriller tones. He used scarcely any gestures. When, opening his eyes—which were usually kept half closed—he cast his glances over the assembly, this was said to constitute the finest of gestures. It was this eloquent eye, running over the funeral trappings of Louis XIV., that made his words—"God alone is Great, my brethren," so impressive. The scene is one of the most famous in the history of oratory and in the annals of the church of Notre Dame, in Paris. The occasion was indeed impressive. It was the funeral service of Louis the Great, whose long and powerful reign was closed at last.

All that could be done to heighten or deepen the sombre splendor was there; the dead king lay before the pulpit on his bier, covered with all the emblazonments, the hatchments and insignia of royalty; the vast church was draped in black; the silver shieldings flashing back the light of the torches and flambeaux. There were assembled all the chivalry of the nation, the royalty, and the courtiers, proud and dissolute men, the gay and beautiful ladies, all, of course, in mourning. In due season Massillon entered the pulpit; he stood a little while, quiet and silent, and than announced his text, "Lo, I have become great!"¹

No doubt it seemed a fitting text to commemorate the life and deeds of the prince who had been called "the Great." The preacher stood quite still, his hands were crossed over his breast, his look settled on the

¹E. Paxton Hood.

bier, mighty feelings seemed struggling over the features ; at last he spoke those very simple words : "There is nothing great but God!" How simple they seem ; a mere truism. We have no account of the tone, only that it was the preacher's awful whisper, but the story is well known how, as he breathed the words, the whole congregation rose in consternation, and looked behind and about them ; it must have been the man, aided by the universal knowledge of his holy life, and by the memory that the living conscience of the dead king had frequently trembled before the terrible preacher.

No other preacher did Louis so much fear. "My father," he said, "I have heard many great preachers, and felt satisfied with them, but every time I have heard you, I have felt dissatisfied with myself." The successor of Bourdaloue as court preacher, as Bourdaloue had been the successor of Bossuet, Massillon was in some respects greater than either of them. His note if less authoritative was more sincere than that of Bossuet, and more persuasive than that of Bourdaloue if not so convincing. After many years his hearers loved to recall the artless look,¹ the affectionate tone, the appearance of a man himself deeply moved, enlightening the minds of his congregation, and stirring their hearts with the tenderest emotions. "Here," exclaimed Baron the famous actor, "here is an orator ! we are but comedians." Voltaire, who could admire the preacher's style, even though he had no sympathy with his faith, kept Massillon's "*Petit Carême*" (ten sermons preached before the heir to the throne in 1717) on his desk, regarding it as one of the best models of prose eloquence.

¹ Sears, p. 237.

The parallel between the English and French preachers of the seventeenth century will be complete when we add that in France and England alike they stand out in marked contrast with those who followed them. The causes which helped to produce the brilliant group in the two countries were not the same, although no doubt the patronage of Charles in England and Louis in France counted for much. Louis XIV. was succeeded by his great-grandson Louis XV., who inherited only his vices. A dissipated sovereign, a court shamelessly profligate, a nobility prodigal and rapacious, a priesthood subservient and corrupt, prepared the way for the French Revolution, before which "the superstition of kings" was rudely shattered, the gay court sent to the guillotine or into exile, the old nobility wiped out and the church shorn of its wealth and authority. France had sown the wind; now she reaped the whirlwind. In her later history, while she has had many preachers of mark, the Gallican Church has produced no second Bossuet or Massillon.

IX. *Lacordaire (1802-1861).* Under the brilliant oratory of the Dominican monk, Lacordaire, the palmy days of French preaching seemed to have returned. His "conferences" in *Notre Dame* took the place of the Advent or Lenten courses to which Louis XIV. listened from the lips of his court chaplains. Unlike them, however, these addresses dealt, as had the sermons of Savonarola, with the signs of the times in which they were delivered.¹ Lacordaire was one of a little knot of earnest young Frenchmen whose aim was to reconcile the doctrine of the church with modern

¹ Pressense, "Contemporary Portraits," p. 141.

society. When this issue was clearly defined it was seen that one or other of these two must hold the controlling place. The group was broken up over the question which it should be. In the chapel of the castle of Montalembert in Burgundy the Bishop of Orleans, Dupanloup, celebrated mass with the champions of Liberal Catholicism; and a tablet bearing their names with the inscription "*pro religione et libertate*" is still to be seen on its walls. But in the critical moment Dupanloup and Montalembert remained by the traditional faith; Lamennais, the most brilliant of the little band, in 1834 broke with the church altogether, and Lacordaire, while he remained faithful to her, never regained her favor. From the pulpit of Saint Roche in Paris he uttered an impassioned denunciation of the *coup d'état* by which Louis Bonaparte waded through blood to his throne, and from that hour he was forbidden to preach in the capital, and a few years after in comparative silence, he died.

X. Didon (1840-1900). Another Dominican, Père Didon, inherited the mantle of Lacordaire. He was only thirty years of age when he electrified Paris by his conference on "Science and her God." At one bound he leaped into the front rank of pulpit orators. With much of Lacordaire's impassioned eloquence and with all his large and liberal sympathies, Père Didon advocated a Christian democracy, which found more acceptance with the people than it did with his ecclesiastical superiors. The church which had silenced the voice of the Protestant preachers, and denied a pulpit to Lacordaire, still true to her traditions, sent Didon into retirement. Whenever he did obtain permission to preach,

it was evident that his early popularity had not waned. In the Lent of 1894 he delivered a series of conferences in Paris on "Belief in the Divinity of Jesus Christ," and the church of the Madeleine was crowded for hours before he entered the pulpit.

XI. *Père Hyacinthe (b. 1827).* Didon was popularly supposed to have been put forward as a foil to Charles Loyson, *Père Hyacinthe*, who after attracting attention as a young preacher of remarkable promise, so far broke with the traditions of his church as to marry and become a leader in the Old Catholic Church. But Loyson, while he had a conscience which prevented his returning to the Roman Church, lacked the courage which would have carried him into the ranks of Protestantism. His eloquence was expended on discussing where the true church was to be found, rather than in proclaiming the great doctrinal verities of the gospel upon which Luther delighted to expatiate. Rome has nothing to fear from an opponent who deals in glittering generalities about religious union and church federation, and *Père Hyacinthe* is only one among many who have given up more than they have gained by failing to follow their convictions to their logical conclusion.

Our study of the French preachers of the seventeenth century may be concluded by comparing the Protestant and Catholic pulpits of the period. Contrasting them, we notice that there were certain points in which the Protestant preachers excelled. They paid more attention to textual analysis, and to careful exegesis. They were eminently distinguished by weight and solidity of thought. Their temptation was to make the definition of doctrine more emphatic than

its application to daily life. Notwithstanding the disadvantages under which they labored these ministers of "the church of the desert" were men who had a sincere respect for learning. To them scholarship was a "means, a power, and also a fitness."¹

But they fell below the Romanists in their tone. They were compelled to be controversialists, as are all thoughtful men who refuse to conform to an established church. Their preaching inevitably left the impression that their faith and practice were matters constantly in dispute. Doctrinal preaching was more strenuous than was the insistence on moral obligation, and faith was made more prominent than practice.

The sermons which they preached to their fellow-sufferers in the solitude of the mountain or to their fellow-exiles in the poverty of London or Amsterdam were often deficient in the grace with which Bossuet or Fénelon harangued their monarch at Versailles. Bossuet said of Calvin, "*Son style est triste*," and it is true that these grave and simple preachers of a persecuted church had little care for the ornaments of rhetoric. For the consummate art of the Catholic orators, the careful structure of sentences, the splendor of musical diction, we look in vain in the sermons of their Protestant contemporaries. "Let us make our style of writing respected," was the counsel of one of their own number, D'Aubigné. Strength rather than beauty was their aim.

Romanist and Protestant have in common many of the best characteristics of French oratory. In what they themselves call *esprit* the French are supreme.

¹ Hoppin, p. 176.

For this reason their pulpit oratory suffers by translation. The form of the flower may be present, but the fragrance is lost. He who believes that truth gains immeasurably by being set forth in the best possible manner will do well to listen to these great preachers in their own tongue. It is indeed a liberal education to sit at the feet of the men whom Vinet so happily characterizes: "Bossuet, in whom all the majesty of Christian dogma seems concentrated; Bourdaloue, the passionate dialectician; Massillon, the universal confessor of human nature; Saurin, the champion of morality; Fénelon, whose name is synonymous with all that is graceful in religion."¹

¹ Lane, "Life of Vinet," p. 145.

X

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

THE first half of the eighteenth century illustrates afresh the truth that oftener than not the features of the pulpit reflect the features of the age. The history of the sermon is the history of the century. "Like people, like priest." To the sudden uprising of the English nation against the Stuarts which drove James II. from his throne, succeeded the reigns of William and Mary, and of Anne. Then followed the Georgian period, in its early years brutal in manners, corrupt in morals, infidel in principles. Preaching sank almost to its lowest point. It had no message, and therefore it had no motive. The profligacy of the court of George II. was scarcely less gross than the profligacy of the court of Charles II. The pulpit of George II. had indeed lost the eloquence which distinguished it under Charles II., but the clergy were still very much in evidence. Thackeray's picture is not over painted:¹

I read that Lady Yarmouth (my most religious and gracious king's favorite) sold a bishopric to a clergyman for five thousand pounds. She betted him that he would be made a bishop, and he lost, and paid her. As I peep into George II.'s St. James, I see crowds of cassocks rustling up the back stairs of the ladies of the court; stealthy clergy slipping purses into their laps; that godless old king yawning under his canopy in the chapel

¹ Thackeray's "Four Georges"—George II.

royal as the chaplain before him is discoursing. Whilst the chaplain is preaching the king is chattering in German almost as loud as the preacher ; so loud that the clergyman actually burst out crying in his pulpit because the defender of the faith and dispenser of bishoprics would not listen to him. No wonder that the clergy were corrupt and indifferent amidst this indifference and corruption. No wonder that skeptics multiplied, and morals degenerated, so far as they depended on the influence of such a king. No wonder that Whitefield cried out in the wilderness, that Wesley quitted the insulted temple to pray on the hillside. I look with reverence on these men at that time. Which is the sublimer spectacle—the good John Wesley, surrounded by his congregation of miners at the pit's mouth, or the queen's chaplains mumbling through their morning office in their ante-room, under the picture of the great Venus, with the door opened into the adjoining chamber, where the queen is dressing, talking scandal to Lord Hervey, or uttering sneers at Lady Suffolk, who is kneeling with the basin at her mistress's side ? I say, I am scared as I look around at this society, at this king, at these courtiers, at these politicians, at these bishops—at this flaunting vice and levity.

When the queen lay dying the Archbishop of Canterbury was brought to pray with her. Sir Robert Walpole, the British prime minister, recommended that this be done, because, as he said, “ It will satisfy all the wise and good fools, who will call us atheists if we don't pretend to be as great fools as they are.” The qualities which distinguished England in the golden prime of Elizabeth, truth, earnestness, energy, high and noble aims, seemed to have given place to what Green, the historian describes as “ the heartlessness, the indifference, the frivolity—in one word, the utter worldliness of the eighteenth century.”² Worldliness was the prevalent note throughout Europe ; but perhaps it was

²J. R. Green, “Oxford Stories.”

loudest in England, and certainly it was the note most readily distinguished in the Established Church. That church had generally been conspicuous for its loyalty to the British crown, but just now the clergy were at heart divided between the rival claimants to the throne. The Stuarts were indeed gone, but an agitation in their favor was still kept up, and many of the clergy without any doubt sympathized with it. This absence of patriotic sincerity in the servants of the crown was bad; but the absence of religious fervor in the servants of Christ was still worse. It was counted a finer thing to be a skeptic than to be an enthusiast. The bishops with few exceptions "lived in worldly ease, and amassed huge fortunes for their families out of the revenues of the church, while half their clergy were left to starve."¹ Some of them "rarely if ever set foot in their neglected dioceses."

The condition of the parson was often pitiful enough. The custom which sprang up in the troublous times of the civil wars of having a chaplain in the house still prevailed, and when the patron was a man of liberal sentiments and cultivated understanding there was something to be urged in its favor. But as Macaulay says:

This was not the general feeling of the country gentlemen. The coarse and ignorant squire, who thought that it belonged to his dignity to have grace every day at his table by an ecclesiastic in full canonicals, found means to reconcile dignity with economy. A young Levite—such was the phrase then in use—might be had for his board, a small garret, and ten pounds a year, and might not only perform his own professional functions, might not only be the most patient of butts and of listeners, might not only be always ready in clear weather for bowls, and

¹ F. W. Farrar.

in rainy weather for shovelbox, but might also save the expense of a gardener or a groom. Sometimes the reverend man nailed up the apricots, and sometimes he curried the coach horses, and cast up the farrier's bills.

The satirist as well as the historian testifies to the servile condition of the parson. The footman is as well off as the chaplain,

Who though in silken scarf and cassock dressed
Wears but a gayer livery at best ;

and the moralist has left us, in the pages of Fielding and his contemporaries, portraits of the clergy which are almost as inglorious. The placid life of the vicar of Wakefield is far enough removed from that of the apostles¹: “The year was spent in moral or rural amusement ; in visiting our rich neighbors and relieving such as were poor. We had no revolutions to fear, no fatigues to undergo ; all our adventures were by the fireside, and all our migrations from the blue bed to the brown.” A generation or two later Miss Austen—herself a rector’s daughter—describes the parish of her clerical hero as well situated “since it is in the center of some of the best preserves in the kingdom,”² and evidently thinks that sporting is one of the chief pursuits of the clergy.

If the Established Church as a whole was lacking in spiritual power, the Dissenters were little better. At no period before or since have they been of greater political importance. Their loyalty to William III. had won them an honorable place in his esteem. Archbishop Tillotson was their friend. The Act of Tolera-

¹ Goldsmith.

² Jane Austen, “Persuasion.”

tion had placed them beyond the reach of serious persecutions. At no period, before or since either, have they been more prosperous in their social and commercial relations. Respectability was their ideal and they attained to it. Carriages were seen at the door of the meeting-house. The citizen's wife and daughters sat in the family pew arrayed in silk and satins "with hair dressed as elaborately as that of Fiji islanders." At Northampton, when he rose in his pulpit, Philip Doddridge faced a congregation in which were conspicuous many officers of the regiment then in the barracks, the stately Colonel Gardiner and many leading local magnates. The mayor was often a Nonconformist, and only now and then did he play the coward and carry the regalia of his office to the parish church instead of to his own chapel. If not prompted by principle, he would have a wholesome dread of the satiric lash of Defoe, who declared, when one hapless mayor committed this offense, that "he disbelieved in those who were willing to damn their souls to save their country." The universities, indeed, were still closed against Nonconformists, and the clergy of the Established Church were able to sneer at the illiteracy of the Dissenters, at the same time that they refused them access to the national schools of learning. Joseph Butler was tempted into conformity by the offer of an education at Oxford, and his case was not singular. To sign the Thirty-nine Articles and to take the communion in the Established Church were still essentials to a college degree. But the lack of religious fervor was far more deplorable than was the lack of scholarly training, and here the Nonconformist could scarcely

cast a stone at the Episcopalian. "The Establishment," says William Jay, "was asleep in the dark and the Dissenters were asleep in the light." Their guilt was all the greater because they were the descendants of men like Bunyan and Baxter and Howe.

Such was the condition of religion in England when the eighteenth century was yet young. Joseph Addison found in her "less appearance of religion than in any neighboring state or kingdom, whether it be Protestant or Catholic." "The subject of religion," says Montesquieu, "if mentioned in society excited nothing but laughter."

What can we expect of the preaching of such an age? For some years after 1660, a contemporary tells us, the name of Charles I. was mentioned in sermons far more often than the name of Christ, and when the change of dynasty made such a reference disloyal, the supreme place was still denied to Him to whom alone it belonged. "Most clergymen seemed to be afraid to preach Christ crucified."¹ So good a man as Bishop Butler told John Wesley that "belief in the immediate guidance of God's Spirit was a horrid thing—a very horrid thing"; and another bishop complained of the same great Methodist reformer because "he believed that God's Spirit was still in the world, miraculously renewing the hearts of men."

The widespread skepticism of the age made the preaching polemical, and the still more general immorality made it ethical. But there was no spiritual exaltation in the controversial sermon and in the ethical unction. The one was as hard and material as the other. For a century the preaching was so far rationalistic that the reason was addressed and not the heart.

¹ James, "The Message and the Messengers," p. 216.

It was the age of apologies for Christianity, and yet never had religion more conspicuously failed to win the acquiescence of the intellect. The core of the gospel was not to be found in the sermons of even the preachers of note. Blackstone, the famous lawyer, when first he went to London visited church after church and "did not hear a single discourse which had more Christianity in it than the writing of Cicero." He said "it would have been impossible for him to discover from what he heard whether the preacher were a follower of Confucius, Mohammed, or Christ."

The preaching of morals without any recognition of the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit was of little practical use. Certainly it failed to interest the congregations. "Dull, duller, dullest" is the sentence passed by a competent critic of the sermons of that age after he had made an honest attempt to read them. Dr. John Caird declares that "the pattern sermon of the Georgian era seems to have been constructed almost expressly to steer clear of all possible ways of getting human beings to listen to it." And indeed it must have been a thankless task to try to attend to the sermons of such a preacher as Samuel Wesley's curate at Epworth, whose favorite subject was the duty of making one's Will. This was in the rural parish; the fashionable preacher of a city congregation is pilloried in Cowper's lines:

Behold the picture! Is it like? Like whom?
The things that mount the rostrum with a skip,
And then skip down again, pronounce a text,
Cry "Hem!" and reading what they never wrote
Just fifteen minutes, huddle up their work,
And with a well-bred whisper close the scene.

The pulpit had well-nigh lost its power in England. So had it also in France, where the corruption of the clergy and the invectives of Voltaire alike prepared the way for the prevalence of atheism at the French Revolution. So had it also in Germany, where the rationalizing movement called Illuminism¹ had transformed Christianity into a system of morality mixed up with the secular topics of the day. To empty benches the preachers in that country delivered agricultural discourses, nature sermons, and field sermons, commendations of vaccination and of the culture of the silkworm, while the lowest depth of commonplace was sounded by the divine who announced as his theme, “How wise the arrangement that death comes not at the beginning but at the end of life.” Such hearers as he had might almost be forgiven if they questioned whether in his case the arrangement was so wise after all.

The utter worldliness of tone, even in functions professedly religious, is what strikes us as we read Sir Walter Besant’s description of how a congregation behaved in church about the year 1750 :

As they entered their pews, the ladies breathed through their fansticks and the gentlemen gazed into the lining of their hats, so ancient, my dear reader, was the mystery of the church-going hat, now almost forgotten. Before sitting down, however, they looked round the church, bowing, smiling, kissing their hands to their acquaintances and friends in the church. At last they sat down ; the service commenced ; it was accompanied by a running fire of artillery, caused by unlocking, opening, and shutting the pew doors. It was continued amid a loud murmur of conversation. The singing was done by a band of vocalists, who went about from church to church singing the hymns in the new Winchester

¹ Ker, p. 264.

measure, and the more pathetic parts of the service were drowned and ruined by the snuffing, sneezing, hawking, and grunting of the snuff-takers, and all were snuff-takers, women as well as men. Snuff was everywhere ; it disfigured the leaves of the Prayer Book ; it lay on the white kerchiefs of the ladies and the lace neckties of the men ; nobody would believe, who had not witnessed it, how great an interruption snuff was to the flow of piety.

The period at which we are now looking was politically a period of transition from the Stuarts and the conflicts associated with their names to the settled loyalty of the latter half of the eighteenth century. In preaching it was a transition period too, and the pulpit seemed to hang between two eras, "one dead, the other powerless to be born." The great preachers of the seventeenth century were all in the past, and the Methodist revival was still in the future.

I. Yet there were in this torpid era preachers worthy of remembrance. We hesitate to number among them such men as Swift or Sterne, or even Blair. A few words for each will suffice. The greatest living master of virile English was Jonathan Swift (1667-1745). He was more hated and more feared than any other man of his time. To this hour the "savage indignation" of this mighty intellect fills us with awe. He has no superior in political satire. But he is not a preacher, although his sermons are still printed with his works. "Without unction, without fervor, without sentiment," says his biographer, "he leaves us with the impression that he neither sought nor found in the gospel which he accepted and delivered so faithfully anything that illuminated or anything that cheered."¹

¹ John C. Collins.

The pulpit can rarely have been more insulted than it was when Laurence Sterne (1713-1768) entered it, and with his wicked leer seemed to the wits on the point of launching his wig at the congregation in a fit of uncontrollable laughter. He loved to startle his hearers by his eccentric texts, and to scandalize them by his irreverent utterances. A race-course where he was betting on the favorite horse suggested his sermon on "Time and Chance," and a lady whom he met there gave him the text in jest: "The race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong." The poet Cowper was right when he said after reading the first two volumes of his sermons:

He is a great master of the pathetic; and if that or any other species of rhetoric could renew the human heart and turn it from the power of Satan unto God, I know no writer better qualified to make proselytes to the cause of virtue than Sterne. But, alas! the evil of a corrupt nature is too deeply rooted in us all to be extirpated by the puny efforts of wit or genius. The way which God has appointed must be the true and the only way to virtue, and that is faith in Christ. . . . Therefore it is that, though I admire Sterne as a man of genius, I can never admire him as a preacher.

No other preacher of the period was so generally praised as Hugh Blair (1718-1800). Samuel Johnson read over the first sermon in his first volume with more than approbation; "to say it is good is too little." These discourses were in his estimation gold itself, and so found the fortunate preacher, for Johnson's approval carried his book through the press and ensured its circulation. George III. was his patron, and wished that every young man in his kingdom might have put into his hands the

Bible and Blair's sermons. The Queen kept them open before her while she dressed, and the fashionable world, at least to this extent, followed her example. Blair was a rhetorician and his sermons as well as any other may illustrate the distinction between rhetoric and eloquence. Each one of them, it has been said, "resembles a mechanical contrivance in a polished case and not easily put out of order."¹ But the celestial fire is conspicuous by its absence. One of the most careful students of the Scottish pulpit declares that in the whole five volumes of his published sermons there is no allusion to the existence or agency of the Holy Spirit.² The extraordinary vogue for Blair illustrates the timid and formal spirit of the pulpit of his era, apart from the Methodist evangelism, to which, indeed, it was so distinctly opposed that it seems as though it only became fervid when inveighing against fervor. To-day we share the feeling of Macaulay: "Surely it is strange that so poor a creature as Blair should have had any literary reputation at all."³

II. The pulpit on the eve of the Methodist awakening had some few preachers who deserve mention. The Commentary of Matthew Henry (1662-1714) preserves to us the ripe fruit of a notable pulpit expositor.

Not only was Isaac Watts (1674-1748) a hymn writer, he was also all his life a preacher and that to one congregation. He was perhaps the first of the Dissenters to attract attention by the grace of his language, but the polished diction of his sermons was not their chief recommendation. Overcoming the disadvantage of a

¹ Wilmott.

² W. M. Taylor, "The Scottish Pulpit," p. 156.

³ Life, II., p. 249.

low stature, he demonstrated, as he himself put it, that "the mind's the standard of the man," and without gestures but solely by the force of his thought and the beauty of his language held his hearers through his long London ministry.

We come to a greater name when we mention Bishop Butler (1692-1752). If Watts is better known by his hymns than by his sermons, Butler lives rather by virtue of his "Analogy of Natural and Revealed Religion," than by his "Fifteen Discourses," which are, however, masterpieces of pulpit reasoning. No doubt they are hard reading, for Butler "wanted only words to make him perfect," but they are all deserving of careful study, while one of them on "The Love of God," is worthy to be placed among the great sermons of our tongue. They were addressed to lawyers, and are well fitted to command the attention of minds which are open to conviction from the kind of testimony that a lawyer accepts. To Chalmers they seemed to be "the most precious repository of sound ethical principles extant in any language," and such judges as Mackintosh, Brougham, Matthew Arnold, and Gladstone agree as to the worth of these sermons and their importance in the armory of defensive theology.

In passing we may commend the sermons of a later preacher of the same century, William Paley (1743-1805), "who borrowed indeed from Butler, but found a style which was mud and left it marble." The only criticism on the language of Paley is that its clearness is apt to beguile us into underestimating its depth. His sermons are without superior in the use of transparent words, clothing thoughts of the first

importance. His hard, north-country intellect lacked warmth, it had no glow, no play of imagination ; but in its own province it was supreme.

The polemics of Dissent of this period are fairly represented by John Gill (1697-1771), who is perhaps best remembered to-day as one of the predecessors of Mr. Spurgeon in the church which he made so famous. Gill was a fine scholar, and his writings are even yet quoted with respect, but his theological soundness and his attainments in the Hebrew tongue were not accompanied by any great enthusiasm for the truths which he preached, and he was too honest a man to affect a sympathy which he did not feel for the new life as it began to stir around him.

A more attractive, and certainly a more sympathetic preacher was Philip Doddridge (1702-1751). Only after he had settled over his first church did he awake, when reading the impassioned appeals of Richard Baxter, to the obligations laid on the Christian minister. Communion with God became a reality to him as he walked beneath the trees in his pleasant garden. He turned from the artillery of the schools, and found his weapons in the Bible itself. Yet, as it has been truly said, he was a survival not a leader. There is more sweetness than light in his hymns. His "Lectures on Preaching" are sensible but not stimulating. His sermons, often rich in an element of exposition, fail to stir us as do those of his spiritual father, Baxter. Unfortunately he was born into an age which was lacking in the heroic. Living surrounded by many devoted friends, and loving the associations of the home and the regular ministrations

of the parish, he was content to sit still. In him "we take leave of the last representative of the old English Dissenters in their best moods."¹ Another and a stronger mold of man was needed to rouse England from its lethargy and to shame it out of its worldliness. Doddridge prayed God that such a man might be raised up, but he prayed also that the revival might not come until his own tranquil course was run. There were, however, souls better prepared to welcome the day-break to whatever sacrifice it might summon them. On his death-bed, Samuel Wesley, the father of the Wesleys, himself a clergyman, laid his hands on the head of his son Charles, and bade him be steadfast, God was about to bless the land. "I shall not see it, my son," he said, "but you will." How true was the old man's prophetic vision we learn now that we come to study the rise of Methodism.

III. John Wesley (1703-1791). So much has needed to be said about the condition of England in the early years of the eighteenth century in order that we may appreciate the marvelous change which was wrought by John Wesley and his associates. The life of Wesley may be said to cover the entire century, for he was born in 1703, and died in 1791, and preserved his vigor of mind and body almost to the last. No other one man influenced his age so powerfully. Mr. Lecky, who will not be suspected of partiality in his judgment, says :

Although the career of the elder Pitt, and the splendid victories by land and sea that were won during his ministry, form unquestionably the most dazzling episodes in the reign of George

¹ Hunt, "Religious Thought," etc., Vol. III., p. 246.

II., they must yield, I think, in real importance to that religious revolution which shortly before had begun in England by the preaching of the Wesleys and Whitefield.

I. It is impossible to consider Wesley as a preacher apart from Wesley as a man, but it is with his preaching that we are now mainly concerned. He was a theologian in the same sense as Luther was, and his preaching was doctrinal as was the preaching of Luther. Neither of these great popular leaders considered truth apart from its application. The echo of the pulpit was heard in the study. The doctrine to be formulated was not speculative but practical. It was indeed deserving of the attention of the scholar, but, far better, it was also worthy of all acceptance. Insisting mainly on salvation immediate and for all who would accept it by an act of faith, the emphasis of Wesley's preaching was laid chiefly on the love of God. He aimed not so much to convince as to affect. The world was weary of apologies for Christianity. What was needed now was its proclamation. His theology was tempered by his conscience, and by his own high moral sense, and perhaps was best suited, in its turn, to modify a disposition naturally somewhat set and rigid. Certainly it is remarkable that the impulsive Whitefield should be the Calvinist, the calm Wesley the Arminian of the century. He was extremely tolerant, and it has been said of him with truth that no other reformer whom the world has ever seen "so united faithfulness to the essential doctrines of revelation with charity towards men of every church and creed."¹ To the Bishop of Lincoln, when that prelate showed an intolerant spirit,

¹ "Prophets of the Christian Faith," pp. 130, 131.

he says, "Alas! my lord, is this a time to persecute any man for conscience' sake? I beseech you do as you would be done by. Think and let think." Nor did he fail to accompany this proclamation of divine love with its complement, an insistence on a moral reformation in those who accepted it. The tree must be judged by its fruit. "I preached," he writes in his diary for November 20, 1785, "in Bethnal Green, and spoke as plainly as I possibly could on having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof. And this I judged far more suitable to such a congregation than telling about justification by faith." The finely balanced mind of Wesley will be appreciated if we consider that the theology which he preached in his sermons and embodied in his books has remained practically the theology of the Methodist pulpit the world over for more than a hundred and fifty years; and that it has not failed in its salutary effect on the lives of those who have adopted it.

2. As we read his sermons to-day we may wonder at the impression which they made on congregations often rude and illiterate, and at times even violent. If they have little in common with the unimpassioned discourses of his predecessors, still less have they in common with the fervid appeals of his immediate followers. Violent ranting was as offensive to John Wesley as was heartless reasoning. In preparing for the pulpit, he wrote much but did not read. He expanded or contracted his material as occasion demanded. The arrangement of his thought was admirable. To systematize was as natural with him as to breathe. He spoke, as he lived, by rule. On board ship, at the mouth of

the coal pit, amid the distractions of a country fair, surrounded by thousands of rough miners in the natural amphitheatre on the Cornish hillside, Wesley never seems to have failed to make himself understood. His slight, compact figure, his flowing silver locks, his benevolent countenance, his clear, resonant utterance, impressed his hearers with a sense of authority, and needed not the clerical garb which he always wore to command respect. If his voice and his gestures were not dramatic, as were Whitefield's, his manner was that of a man of fearless spirit, of intense earnestness, and of rare spiritual fervor. Robert Hall said of him, "While he set all things in motion, he was himself perfectly calm, and phlegmatic; he was the quiescence of turbulence." The center of a whirlpool of excited emotions, Wesley was himself apparently unmoved.

3. The power which John Wesley swayed as a preacher was not due entirely nor perhaps chiefly to what he said, but to what he was. The observed of all observers, he passed through the ordeal unscathed. His life was without reproach. (1) There were times when his judgment of men and things was open to criticism, he was not free from superstition, he was now and then foolishly credulous. But his excellent common sense was never long in abeyance. Even the affliction of a termagant and half irresponsible wife, who appropriated his papers and money, and was never to be trusted to speak the truth, was borne with equanimity. During the scandal caused by his wife's publication of stolen, interpolated, or forged letters, when his brother Charles was in a fever of excitement, John was still master of the situation. "Brother," he said, "when I

devoted to God my ease, my time, my life, did I exempt my reputation?"

(2) Wesley had in him much of the soldier. The respect for authority, the regard for discipline, the love of order which one associates with the name of Wellington—who was indeed a scion of the same family—were in him remarkably prominent. If he knew that he must die the next day, he said, he would do exactly as he was now planning to do. "I should dine at such an hour, and preach in the evening, and have supper, and then I should go to bed and sleep as soundly as ever I did in my life." Always in haste, he declared himself to be, but never in a hurry. His equable temperament was not disturbed by ill health. When close on four-score he remarked that he could not remember to have felt lowness of spirits for one quarter of an hour since he was born. "By the grace of God, I never fret; I repine at nothing; I am discontented at nothing."

(3) His manner of life was as simple, his spirit as humble, as the least of the apostles. In his personal habits he was fastidious only for cleanliness and neatness. The mob might pursue him with stones to his carriage, but he would retreat with a deliberateness which was in itself victorious, and, once there, would comb out his white locks, and find relief in the pages of his Horace. His only personal effects when he died were two silver spoons (and they were in different parts of the country) and the copyright of his books which he vested in the Methodist Society.

(4) Riding all over England, chiefly on horseback, to address his congregations, struggling with hard roads, and at the mercy of an uncertain climate, a statesman

in his control over his various societies, a general in marshaling his forces for Christian achievements, Wesley was as versatile as he was intense. He published grammars in at least five languages, he dabbled in medicine, he wrote a novel, he issued a library of religious literature, he engaged in controversies which are now happily forgotten, and composed hymns which will live as long as our language. His "Journal" is still the best history of the rise of Methodism, and his sermons the best compendium of its theology. (5) His course was pursued under the abiding persuasion that he was doing the divine will. His spiritual experience, early quickened by the reading of Law's "Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life," never lost the tinge of mysticism which remains the charm of that impressive book, but it was also an experience of constant communion with his Father in heaven. Love for God kindled in his bosom love for man. "We may die," he declared, "without the knowledge of many truths and yet be carried into Abraham's bosom. But if we die without love, what will knowledge avail? Just as much as it avails the devil and his angels!" (6) The sight of sin only quickened in him the zeal for service. In Newcastle-upon-Tyne he went down to the low quarter of the town and stood by the old pump which may still be seen there, and there he opened his commission. He says of the people: "Such blasphemy, such cursing, such swearing, even from the mouth of little children! Surely this place is ripe for the Master!" His text to them was: "He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities." "His tenderness was such that those poor and wicked people clung

to his hands and his clothes when he had finished." A clergyman of the Episcopal Church, he never failed to respect her however hardly she might treat him. His preachers at first were not permitted to hold their services at the same hours as those of the parish church. He would preach wherever opportunity offered ; if not in the church, then in the churchyard ; if not there, then on the common. "I desire," he said, "to have a league offensive and defensive, with every soldier of Christ. We have all not only one Lord, one faith, one baptism, but we are all also engaged in one warfare."

The Established Church of England showed him little consideration. Often the drunken parson of the parish led the mob in their onslaught on him and his followers. Rarely were the pulpits of the church in which his father and himself and his brother Charles were ordained open to him. But he held on his way steadfast to the end, and to-day on the wall of Westminster Abbey you will see the medallion of his face and that of his brother, the one the most successful popular preacher, the other the sweetest poet of their generation. There also you may read three sentences which better than any others that could have been chosen express his spirit and embody his faith : "I look on all the world as my parish" ; "God buries his workmen, but continues his work" ; and then the last words which broke from his lips in death, "The best of all is, God is with us."

It is not the least of John Wesley's excellencies that his own preaching did not furnish a model for his followers. Each man was left free to be himself. The market-place, the common, and the fair trained the early Methodists to be effective open-air speakers. "When

Mr. Wesley drops, all this is at an end," said the wise men of the world, and Wesley himself added, "So it will, unless before God calls him home one is found to stand in his place."

IV. John Fletcher (1729-1785). The man to whom Wesley turned was the saint of early Methodism—John Fletcher, of Madeley. A Swiss by birth, he was converted in England, and to the end of his days remained a clergyman of the Established Church. Southey spoke of him as "one whom the Church of England may hold as one of the most pious and excellent of her sons."¹ "A seraph," wrote Robert Hall, "who burned with the ardor of divine love, and sounded all the depths of Christian piety." The walls of his little study are still "stained with his breathings while engaged in prayer." He was the most modest of men, but in the pulpit he knew no fear. To Berridge, the eccentric vicar of Everton, he introduced himself as a new convert who had taken the liberty to wait upon him for the benefit of his instruction and advice. But before long, after he began to preach, he was in the full current of evangelistic work. Rejecting one parish because in it there "was too much money and too little labor," he found the place best suited to his taste in a colliery village, where among men working in the pit and the smelting furnace this gentlest and sweetest of evangelists spent his life. Every Sunday at five o'clock in the morning he went round his parish inviting the people to service. At no hour of the day or night did misery or suffering knock at his door and fail of admittance. Equally fluent in his native tongue

¹ Marrat, "Life of Fletcher of Madeley."

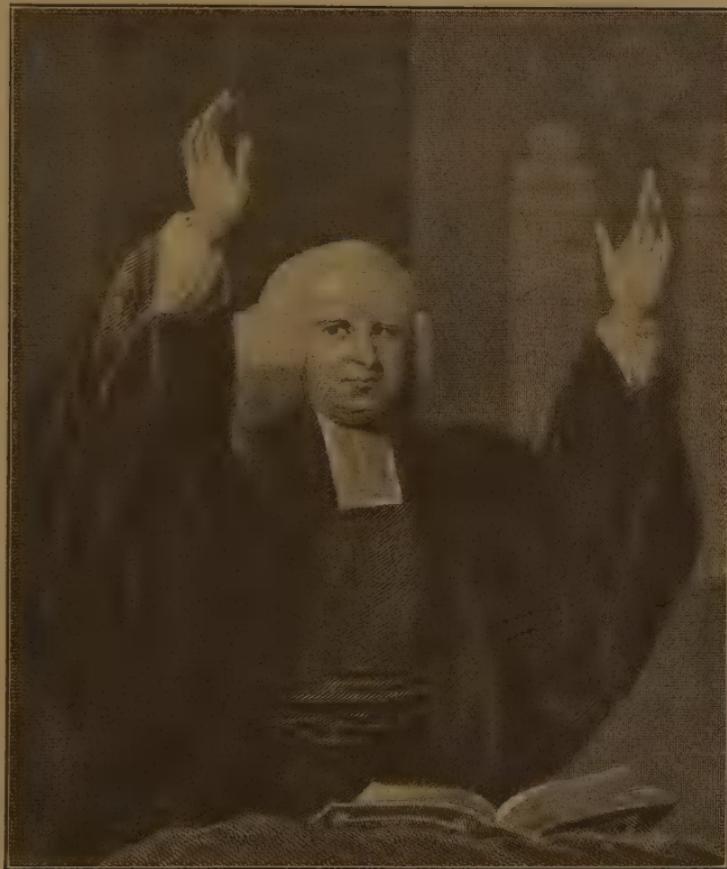
and in English he preached one Sunday in the yard of a French jail to two thousand people who had gathered there to see a murderer broken on the wheel, and soon after in the new Methodist chapel in London to a crowd filling every foot of it, and with such a light from his face and such divine unction in his spirit and such chaste and glowing eloquence on his lips that the people, as Wesley says, hung on his words "to all but their attention dead." "Such a burning and shining light," in the estimation of Wesley, "instead of being confined to a country village ought to shine in every corner of the land."

The calmness of Wesley and the unction of Fletcher influenced many of the early preachers of Methodism who were themselves not pre-eminent for these graces. Such a man was John Bradburn, of whom Adam Clarke said, "I have never heard his equal," and who while holding vast audiences spell-bound under his oratory never forgot how much he owed to "Saint Fletcher," who had sent him forth to his work with the words, "If you preach forty years and save only a single soul, don't think your time and labor lost." Fletcher understood and valued the help of the lay preacher, whose only ordination came from heaven. "Captain Scott," he wrote to Whitefield, "preached to my congregation a sermon which was more blessed though preached only from my horse-block than a hundred of those I preach in the pulpit." The interest which Fletcher felt for a French criminal was only a sample of the prison labor of the Methodists. Silas Todd was with many a condemned malefactor during his last hours, and would not hesitate to jump on the

death cart on its way to the gallows, and sitting beside the criminal on his coffin plead with him to be reconciled to Christ. The charge that the evangelism of the eighteenth century took for its cry, "Save yourself" is untrue. It was as altruistic as any passion for philanthropy of the present hour. It was not to save his own soul that such a preacher as John Nelson, whose life reads like a romance, as romance indeed it is, bore the foulness of the country jail and braved the fierceness of the drunken mob. A giant in strength, yet one of nature's gentlemen, he was able to say when with Christian in the Allegory he bore his testimony before the denizens of Vanity Fair, "The Lord made my brow like brass, so that I could look upon them all as grasshoppers, and pass through the city as if there had been none in it but God and me."

V. George Whitefield (1714-1770). The passion for saving souls was the one thing which bound together the various elements in the Methodist society, but the most illustrious of all the evangelists of the century was outside the Methodist ranks. In 1731 the gates of Pembroke College, Cambridge, closed on Samuel Johnson, "expelled by poverty to seek a precarious subsistence and to earn a lasting reputation in the obscure alleys of London." In the following year those same gates opened to receive a student scarcely better off than he, "but destined to acquire a still more extensive and a more enduring celebrity."¹ He came from a tavern in Gloucester "where he had stolen his mother's purse and given part of the money to the poor, purloined books but these books of devotion, drawn liquor for the tipplers, and

¹ Sir James Stephen, "Essays," p. 381, *et seq.*



GEORGE WHITEFIELD

occasionally been tipsy himself, while at the same time composing sermons and robbing himself of hours of sleep in order to study the Bible." The battle was fought between a passion for the drama and a conviction that he must preach. Meanwhile, the caprices of a versatile nature were now lifting him heavenward and now plunging him in dissipation, but before he was seventeen years old the victory was won, and from that time to his dying day George Whitefield "lived amongst embittered enemies and jealous friends without a stain on his reputation."¹

1. At Oxford he met the Wesleys, and joined the little band—there were but fifteen of them in all—known as the "Holy Club." The sight of these men walking through a crowd of jeering students to take the communion week by week in St. Mary's Cathedral, "awakened his sympathy, moved his courage, and prepared him to take up his cross." No man ever battled more resolutely than did Whitefield against the call to preach. That this might not be his destiny, he says, "I have prayed a thousand times, till the sweat has dripped from my face like rain." Happily his labor was lost. He was ordained at twenty-two, and he could say with the utmost sincerity, "When the bishop's hands were laid on my head, my heart was melted down and I offered up my whole spirit, soul, and body." His first sermon followed a few days after. "I preached," is his record of it, "with as much freedom as if I had been a preacher for some years. I have heard since that a complaint had been made to the bishop that I drove fifteen mad by the first sermon. The worthy

¹ J. P. Gledstone, "George Whitefield."

prelate wished that the madness might not be forgotten before next Sunday."

2. Henceforth he lived to preach. Traveling in America—and he crossed the Atlantic thirteen times—he preached one hundred and seventy-five sermons in seventy-five days. When on "short commons" he still preached once a day and three times on Sunday. To the Quaker poet¹ of New England it has been given to picture him by the side of the river which alike poet and preacher have made famous :

Lo ! by the Merrimac Whitefield stands
In the temple that never was made with hands—
Curtains of azure and crystal wall,
And dome of the sunshine over all !
A homeless pilgrim, with dubious name,
Blown about on the wings of fame ;
Now as an angel of blessing classed,
And now as a mad enthusiast.
Possessed by the one dread thought that lent
Its goad to his fiery temperament,
Up and down the world he went,
A John the Baptist crying—Repent !

At Newburyport, on the Merrimac, Whitefield preached his last sermon, and then, followed by a crowd that would not let him rest, he stood on the stairs of the house where he was to sleep, his chamber-candle in his hand, and continued speaking to them the words of life, until the candle flared up, died down, and expired. He went to his room, and the next morning they found him dead. Weary in his Lord's work, to use his own memorable distinction, he was never weary of it. "Oh, to shine," he cried one night as he stood preaching in the

¹ Whittier.

open air, and looked up to the heavens about him, "oh, to shine as the brightness of the firmament, as yonder stars for ever and ever." Who can doubt but that his cry was answered? "I seek the stars," were the words engraved on his signet ring, and they gave the motto to all his life. Thirty-four years of incessant preaching, and at fifty-six he attained the object of his aspiration.

3. We may easily fail to understand the amazing power of Whitefield. The seventy-five sermons which he left are even more difficult to read than most sermons. But as to the power itself there can be no question. He was, as John Newton said, "the original of popular preaching and all our popular preachers are only his copies." This, however, is to say little. "His face was language, his intonation music, his action passion." He could at will kindle in his hearers the same feelings which burned in his own breast. To a simple New England farmer riding down the Connecticut Valley to hear him, as he drew near the spot where Whitefield was to speak it seemed as though the very horses felt the breathings of the Spirit.¹ The most unlikely witnesses testify to his powers. Hume, the historian, declared that it was worth going twenty miles to hear him. Foote, the greatest mimic of his day, wrote to Garrick, its greatest actor, "His oratory is not at its full height until he has repeated a discourse forty times." To Benjamin Franklin, the perfection of accent, emphasis, and modulation gave the effect of "an excellent piece of music." Franklin tells us that so moved was one of his hearers in Philadelphia, that when the collection was announced, although it was for an object against

¹ Walker, "Aspects of Religious Life," etc., p. 91.

which he had protested, he begged a Quaker who sat next to him to lend him some money. "At any other time," was the rejoinder, "I would lend thee freely, but not now, for thee seems to be out of thy right senses." Under the terror which he aroused as he invoked the thunder and lightning on Hampstead Heath, near London, when he saw the storm coming, more than one of his hearers fell dead. Even when cramped within the bounds of a London drawing-room and brought face to face with fashionable frivolity, he so startled Chesterfield, accounted the most heartless man of the world of his time, that when the preacher pictured a blind man all unconscious of his danger approaching the verge of a precipice, it was the voice of the courtier that cried, "For heaven's sake, Whitefield, save him!"

He was always ready. Passing over a common, he found himself surrounded by twelve hundred people collected to see a man hung in chains. Within sight of the criminal he preached at a few moments' notice. On another occasion he arrested the procession on its way to the gallows, and for an hour stood between the culprit and death, while he offered salvation to him and the multitude. At the famous Moorfield's fair, in London, he started to preach at six o'clock in the morning, and had an audience of ten thousand people. "For once," he says, "I got the start of the devil. I mounted my field pulpit, when all flocked immediately around it; I preached on these words: 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,' etc. They gazed, they listened, they wept, and I believe that many felt themselves stung with the deep conviction of their past sins." The drummers, Merry Andrews, puppet shows, players, found

their occupations gone. At sight of Whitefield's robes and pulpit even the clown was deserted, and when in revenge he mounted another man's shoulders, and, armed with a long whip, made at the preacher, he lost his balance and fell baffled to the ground. Stones and dirt and rotten eggs and dead cats were flung at him in vain. After three hours of praying, preaching, and singing, Whitefield retired to his tabernacle hard by with his pockets "full of notes from persons under concern, which he read amidst the praises and spiritual acclamations of thousands."

4. The characteristics of his eloquence have been sufficiently indicated by these testimonials to his success as a preacher. He had clear blue eyes, the effect of which was enhanced rather than diminished by a slight cast; a voice rich and varied, an organ, a flute, a harp, all in one, and of such range that Franklin found by actual measurement that it could be distinctly heard by more than thirty thousand people; such exquisite modulation that it was said he could pronounce even the word "Mesopotamia" so as to move you to laughter or touch you to tears; gestures which never failed to express his thought, and an emotional nature which while never carrying him beyond himself would find vent in loud and passionate weeping. No one better understood the art of startling his hearers by an unexpected turn to his words. In almost his last sermon he suddenly thundered out, "Works! works! a man get to heaven by works! I would as soon think of climbing to the moon by a rope of sand."

Although in private often lacking in the fearlessness which made Wesley so great a general, once on his feet

and face to face with his audience Whitefield was bold as a lion. Like Wesley he was not fortunate in his married life, for which perhaps his wandering spirit little fitted him. Home he had none; rather, perhaps, he was too much at home everywhere to keep a fireside of his own. With other men who have lived in public, he often sinned against good taste. From long familiarity with audiences he seemed to be incapable of drawing the line between what was sacred to himself and what belonged to the world at large. A more sensitive nature than his would have shrunk from choosing as a text for the funeral sermon of his wife, "The creature was made subject to vanity." But his defects were the defects of his excellencies, and in giving himself body, soul, and spirit to the ministry he did not scruple to "expose to public gaze the deepest emotions of the heart."¹ At the same time this very consecration made him regardless of self, provided the Master whom he served might be honored. "Let the name of George Whitefield perish," he exclaimed, "if God be glorified."

Although Wesley and Whitefield were often opposed the one to the other in theology, in their effect for good on the people at large they were one. Alike in faith and practice one preacher was the complement of the other. The religious quickening in England owed much to each. To the fancy of Fletcher they recalled the two great prophets of Israel. "Our Elijah," he wrote after Whitefield's death, "has lately been translated to heaven, gray-headed Elisha is yet awhile continued on earth, still intent upon extensive service for the glory of the Redeemer and the good of souls."

¹ Stephen, p. 390.

VI. Some Lesser Lights. In a few words let us recall some of the lesser lights in the evangelical revival. Nowhere was the influence of that revival felt so quickly and so powerfully as in the Established Church. John Wesley and his brother Charles and George Whitefield were clergymen on whom the hands of her bishops had been laid in ordination. For the church of their fathers they never ceased to pray and to love. Ere long in many a parish church the doctrines on which they laid such stress were preached. We have seen how Berridge (b. 1716) welcomed Fletcher when he came a stranger to his door. John Berridge might be eccentric in his preaching, but he was sound at heart. For twenty years he itinerated through the country around his parish of Everton, preaching from ten to twelve sermons a week and riding a hundred miles. During the first year after his conversion he was visited by a thousand persons under serious concern. The magistrate and the squire raged against him, but he did not fear them. His income, his fortune, even his family plate were all freely sacrificed to the evangelization of his neighborhood. Alike the humor and the grace of the man found expression in the epitaph written by himself: "Here lie the remains of John Berridge, late vicar of Everton, and an itinerant servant of Jesus Christ: who loved his Master and his work; and, after running his errands many years, was called up to wait on him above. Reader, art thou born again? No salvation without the new birth! I was born in sin, February, 1716. Remained ignorant of my fallen state till 1730. Lived proudly on faith and works for salvation till 1754. Admitted to Everton vicarage, 1755."

Fled to Jesus alone for refuge, 1756. Fell asleep in Christ January 22, 1793."

On the wild Yorkshire moors lies the little village of Haworth. There Charlotte Bronté wrote "*Jane Eyre*," the novel which made her famous, but there also, a century before, lived William Grimshaw (b. 1708), one of the most powerful of the evangelical preachers. The lonely village would be astir with life when Whitefield came to hold a field day there, and the countryside bowed before his eloquence. An equally picturesque figure was that of John Newton (b. 1725), who as a boy followed the sea with his father; and as a young man toiled, a white slave, on the African coast, half-naked, half-starved, with a copy of Euclid as his only literature, and the memory of his sweetheart—"never absent for a single hour from his waking thoughts"—as his only solace. Rescued from this bondage he found his way back to England, married, and under the preaching of Whitefield came into the light. His mother dying when he was a child had cherished the hope that he would be a minister, and her Bible had become his companion in his later voyages. At forty he was ordained, and first in Olney as the neighbor of Cowper the poet, then in London, occupied a foremost place among the evangelical preachers of his time. "Remember that thou also wast a bondsman," were the words which he inscribed on the mantelpiece of his study, but they were not needed to recall to his mind the dark days, when, shunned and despised even by the savages among whom he lived, Newton, to quote his own words, was "big with mischief and like one inflicted with a pestilence,

capable of spreading taint wherever he went."¹ He was not a great preacher but he was a very useful one ; he was not a great poet, but his hymns will live as long as Christian experience delights in verses which, however defective they may be in their metre, waken responsive chords in every devout heart ; he was not a great man, and yet to know him is to feel that, frank, and shrewd and sympathetic, he himself was better than his preaching or his poetry. Excluded from the pulpits of Oxford for his Calvinism, but always popular in London, William Romaine (b. 1714), was a better preacher than Newton and a more profound theologian. Henry Venn (b. 1721), the author of "The Complete Duty of Man," was "at once a preacher at whose voice multitudes wept and trembled and a companion to whose privacy the wise resorted for instruction, the wretched for comfort, and all for sympathy." Richard Cecil (b. 1748), was for many years the most popular representative of evangelical doctrine in the pulpits of London. Thomas Scott (b. 1747), followed Newton at Olney, although with none of Newton's cheery optimism ; but if he failed to attract hearers to his preaching he wrote a treatise on experimental religion, "The Force of Truth," which was once extolled as scarcely inferior to the "Confessions of Augustine," and also a commentary on the Bible which had a great vogue at the time, although written amid the exigencies of the domestic circle in which Scott himself tells us that he would often rock the cradle with one hand while he held the pen with the other ; to which Robert Hall, with more reason than charity, retorted that the cry-

¹ Stephen, p. 405.

ing of the baby could be heard all through it from Genesis to Revelation.

On these men Whitefield exercised a greater influence than did Wesley. His doctrinal views were more in accord with theirs, and his freedom from organization allowed them to remain in their parish churches without becoming entangled in the machinery of a new society. The preachers who held the Calvinism of Whitefield, and worked outside the pale of the Established Church were mainly trained at the Countess of Huntingdon's college at Trevecca, in Wales, and exercised their gifts in the chapels which she built in various parts of the country. The principal of these was the Surrey Tabernacle, in London, where for half a century multitudes flocked to listen to one of the most original of English preachers, Rowland Hill (1744-1833). "I go to hear Rowland Hill," said Sheridan, "because his ideas come hot from the heart." With his expressive features well under command he could pass in a moment from grave to gay, from lively to severe,¹ and his voice seemed to each person in the audience to be addressed especially to him. Sir James Stephen says of him that "he could not fail to be popular. His discourses were often deeply pathetic, but there was also about him that rich and apt humor which always delights the populace, and which characterized so many early Methodist preachers; a result perhaps as much of their hardy, healthful mode of life, their encounters with all kinds of men, and their unsophisticated habits, as of constitutional predisposition. Berridge delighted in Hill; Grimshaw would have

¹ See "Life of Bishop Blomfield," Vol. I., p. 77.

pressed him to his heart ; Whitefield could hardly write to him without a strain of godly wit. Berridge was not afraid of the young preacher's humor, he had hope from that ; but feared his discouragement, or his being "lifted up" by popularity. "Fear nothing but yourself," he wrote him incessantly ; "study not to be a fine preacher; Jericho was blown down with rams' horns ; look simply to Jesus. Make the best of your time, and while the Lord affords traveling health and strong lungs blow your horn soundly." Never was advice more willingly followed. The mingled wit and wisdom of Rowland Hill held London as perhaps since the days of Latimer it had not been held. The proprieties of the pulpit might often be defied and its homiletical canons swept aside, but the sermon rarely failed of its effect. Milner, the Dean of Carlisle, gave expression to a general conviction when he said, "Mr. Hill ! Mr. Hill ! I felt to-day ; it is this slap-dash preaching, say what they will, that does all the good."

Among the wild mountains of Wales the Calvinism of Whitefield struck deep roots. The rugged element in the Welsh as also in the Scottish character seemed to find something congenial in the Calvinism of Whitefield. In Wales, however, the preacher gave wings to his imagination as in Scotland he did not. Christmas Evans (1766-1838) was in his generation the poet of the pulpit. Humor he had and passion, but above all other things imagination. To his fancy everything took visible form. The prodigal son left his father's house in a beaver hat, blue coat, and top boots, with a spyglass dangling from his neck and a cigar in his mouth. When Christmas Evans preached this

sermon near Llandiloes, "and directing his finger in the open air to a distant mountain, described the father as seeing him while yet a great way off, the heads of the thousands of the congregation were turned in the direction of the preacher's finger, expecting to see the father coming down from the hills." In all the literature of the pulpit there is nothing more thrilling than his sermon, "The Spirit Wandering in Dry Places, seeking Rest and finding None"; his "Journey in Search of the Young Child" is as fascinating as the story of "The Other Wise Man," and his sermon on the Resurrection has been often reproduced although not always with acknowledgment. His triumphs were achieved in his native Welsh; and among his own countrymen the one-eyed preacher was without a peer. One eye only, for he had lost the other, but that eye, as Robert Hall said, so brilliant that it could light an army through a forest in the dark. With his old horse, as they climbed the hills, he would hold imaginary conversations, and the heaviest road was mastered when he coaxingly said, "Only one low mountain more, and there will be capital oats, excellent water, and a warm stable—come up, lad." To the end Christmas Evans remained a peasant in his simplicity, with the love which the country kindled in the poet for her revolving seasons and for her scenery responsive to the changing months. "This is my last sermon," he said after preaching at Swansea, "I am about to depart. I have labored in the sanctuary for three and fifty years, and my comfort is that I have not labored without blood in the vessel." Shortly after this shadow of death passed over him, and then waking from a state of unconsciousness he cried,

“Good-bye! drive on.” The last low hill had been climbed, and now the pilgrimage was at an end.

We have said that the life of John Wesley covered almost the entire century. There was no aggressive note in the preaching to which he listened in his youth. “Above all things no zeal!” was the motto of the leaders in the Established Church; and the Dissenters themselves, however much they might differ with their Episcopal brethren in other matters, were as a rule themselves conformists in this shrinking from zeal. How the spirit of the century changed we have sufficiently shown in this review of its preaching. The voice of the pulpit became the voice of the people. Ten years only before the eighteenth century died out, and not long before the death of John Wesley, Henry Crabbe Robinson heard him preach, and this is his remembrance of it:¹ “He stood in a wide pulpit, and on each side of him stood a minister, and the two held him up, having their hands under his arm pits. His feeble voice was barely audible. But his reverend countenance, especially his long white locks, formed a picture never to be forgotten. There was a vast crowd of lovers and admirers. It was for the most part pantomime, but the pantomime went to the heart. Of the kind I never saw anything comparable to it in after life.” That figure of John Wesley standing almost on the parting line between the two centuries, is alike a memorial of victory and an augury of hope. His father had seen the vision of an awakened England from his death bed; during seventy fruitful years his son had helped more than any other one man to make that vision a reality.

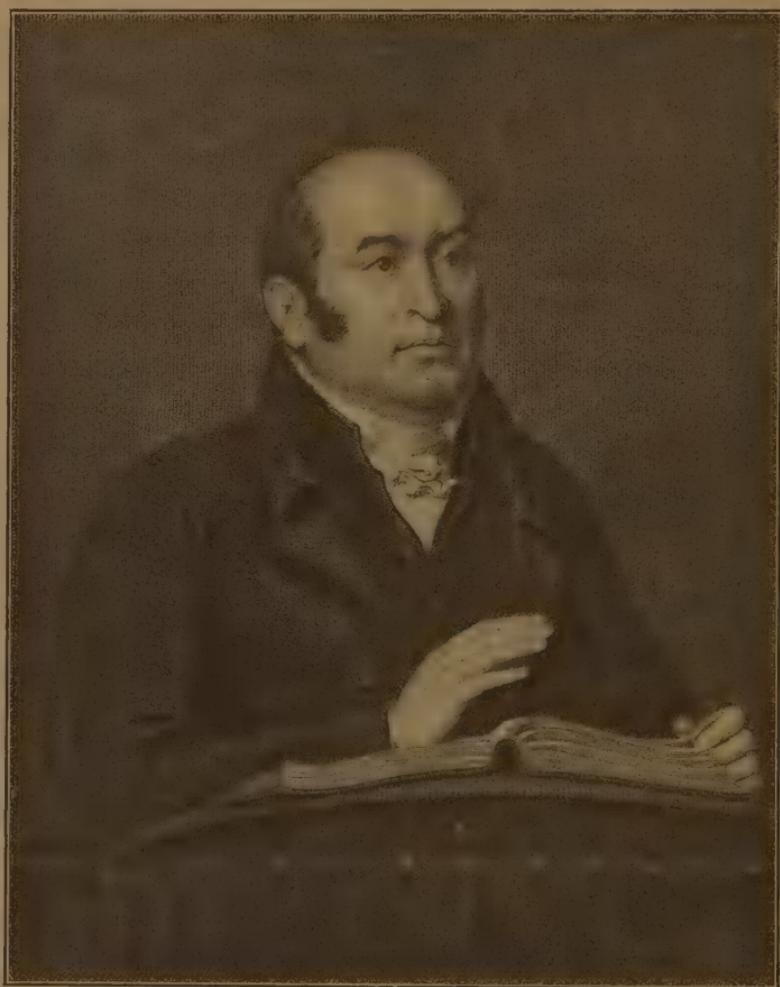
¹ “Reminiscences,” Vol. I., p. 12.

XI

HALL AND CHALMERS

IN the annals of the British pulpit the two names worthy of our special study at the close of the eighteenth century are those of Robert Hall and Thomas Chalmers. The first fervor of Methodism was passing when they began to attract attention, and they may be said to hold a transition place between the spiritual awakening of the eighteenth century and the calmer religious life of the century which succeeded. While it is no doubt true that they were too sensitive to the influences that surrounded them as they grew up to remain indifferent to the great work which owed its inception to John Wesley, it is also true that the eloquence of Hall and Chalmers owed nothing to Methodism. To both these men belonged the prerogative of genius ; in any age they must have won fame as orators ; it was the happy lot of evangelical Christianity to number them among its foremost advocates.

I. Robert Hall (1764-1831). I. Robert Hall was the son of a preacher, and at sixteen was set apart for the work of the ministry. When a child of only nine years he had been absorbed in the writings of Jonathan Edwards. Soon after, his first schoolmaster fired him with a passion for liberty which never died out. About the same time he was captivated by the splendor of Isaiah, and felt within him the first stirrings of the orator. His preference, as he began to preach, was for



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great texts, and although he failed utterly in his early ventures as a speaker, yet he failed because for the moment he could not collect his thoughts, and not because the thoughts were not there. At the university of St. Andrews in Scotland, he was the classmate and friend of James Mackintosh, who never ceased to lament that in him, if the pulpit gained a great preacher the world of speculative philosophy lost a great metaphysician. A brief experience as tutor at Bristol was followed by a call to Cambridge, where he was chosen to succeed Robert Robinson (1735-1790) in the pastorate of the Baptist church. The test was a severe one, for Robinson had left the church when at the height of his powers, and only because he was too honest a man to remain in an evangelical pulpit after he had ceased to hold the evangelical faith. As a lad he had strolled into the London Tabernacle to hear Whitefield, had been arrested when, in the course of his sermon, the great preacher abruptly broke off, paused for a few moments, then burst into a flood of tears, lifted up his hand and eyes, and exclaimed: "Oh, my hearers, the wrath to come! the wrath to come!" Yielding himself to God, Robinson at the same time found his vocation as one of his ministers. Before long that same tabernacle was crowded as he stirred his audience to enthusiasm with his powerful appeals. How he must have preached in those bright years we may gather from the noble hymns which preserve alike his faith and his power, "Come, thou Fount of every blessing," and "Mighty God, while angels bless thee." At Cambridge he had been as popular with the students, who defied the university authorities in their eagerness

to hear him, as with the simplest member of his despised conventicle. "He had," says his successor, "a musical voice and was master of all its intonations; he had wonderful self-possession, and could say what he pleased and when he pleased and how he pleased." Without the advantage of a good education Robinson put himself to school, trained his mind to habits of careful observation, and became the master of a Saxon style which for vigor and clearness is to this hour without any superior in our English literature. His "Village Discourses" are still models of simple strength; his translations of Saurin's discourses read like original compositions; and his introduction to Claude's *Essay on the Composition of the Sermon* will be studied long after the book which it introduces is forgotten. It was some little time before Robert Hall found his own feet while under the spell of this unique and powerful personality. He was in danger of becoming only an echo of his predecessor, until he heard one old woman say to another that sometimes he almost reminded her of her dear Dr. Robinson. This brought him to himself, cured him of emulation, and forced him to be true to the man that was in him. Recalling the time when, as a Cambridge student, he had listened to Robert Hall, Professor Sedgwick, the distinguished geologist, says :

He always began with a prayer (sometimes of considerable length) uttered with great earnestness and simplicity, but injured in effective power from an apparent asthmatical difficulty of articulation. There was the same constitutional or organic difficulty in the commencement of his sermons. But the breathing of his sentences became more easy as he advanced, and before long there was a moral grandeur in his delivery which triumphed over

all organic defect or physical weakness. While he rolled out his beautiful and purely constructed sentences one felt as if under the training of a higher nature. In occasional flights of imagination, in discussion of metaphysical subtlety, we were for a while amazed and almost in fear for the preacher. And then he would come down, with an eagle's swoop, upon the matter he had in hand, and enforce it with a power of eloquence such as I never felt or witnessed in the speaking of any other man. Such is my feeling now. Many a long year has passed away since I last heard Robert Hall. I have listened with admiration to many orators in the two Houses of Parliament, and to many good and heart-moving preachers, but I never heard one who was in my mind on the same level with Robert Hall.

The difficulty in breathing to which Sedgwick refers was not the most serious obstacle against which Robert Hall had to struggle. Throughout his life he was a sufferer from a calcareous formation at the base of the spine, "an apparatus of torture" as it has been described, which caused him excruciating pain, prevented him from sitting to study, and forced him often to lie on the floor for hours together. At times the anguish was so severe that under its attacks his mind tottered, and in the end he was obliged to leave Cambridge for a less exacting and less exciting pastorate. The remainder of his life was spent at Leicester and Bristol. Toward the close of his ministry his physical sufferings seemed to abate, but it was noticed that often it was when tortured by his fearful malady most severely, that his genius seemed to be most wonderful. He sang sweetest, as did the nightingale in the legend, when his breast was pressed against the thorn. It was proof of his amazing vitality as well as of the resolute temper of his intellect, that he lived so long as he did, uttered no

single word of complaint, and preached nobly to the last. When he was told that his animation increased with his years, he answered, "Indeed! then I am like touchwood, the more decayed, the easier fired."

2. His character was remarkable for its simplicity and its piety. He shrank from publicity, and only rarely could he be persuaded to preach in London. No man was easier of approach. All that he had or knew was at the service of his friends. He loved nothing more than to preach in a farmhouse kitchen, where the laborers, resting from their day's work, would gather to listen to him, and in after years would say with a measure of honest pride that it was to them that his finest discourses were delivered. His humility was not reserved for the throne of God, but was equally evident in his treatment of his fellow-men. To him was granted the spirit of the little child, simple, docile, and friendly with all. His moral nature was easily roused to admire what was noble and to inveigh against what was base. Loyal as he was to the crown, he shared with many Non-conformists an admiration for the struggle against monarchy which culminated in the French Revolution, and dared to say when the news of Waterloo filled England with patriotic frenzy, "The battle and its results appear to me to put back the clock of the world six degrees." The bent of his mind led him to dwell much on the moral perfection of God, and in his public prayers, simple as they were in language, there was a spirit of awe and reverence and adoring love which made many a worshiper feel as though he would be willing the preacher's sermon should be dispensed with if only the memory of his petitions might remain.

3. His sermons are equally marvelous for the perfection of their proportions and for their range. Each discourse is complete in itself, and leaves us with one distinct impression, to produce which a mind as acute as it is affluent has for the time being concentrated all its powers. The last word seems to have been said on the subject under discussion, and yet we are conscious that the materials of the preacher so far from being exhausted are only enriched by his researches into truth. Dr. Parr, the eminent Greek scholar, who knew Hall well, declared that he had “the eloquence of the orator, the fancy of a poet, the acuteness of a schoolman, the profoundness of a philosopher, and the piety of a saint.”

The keynote of his composition was massiveness. The eloquence of the age was that of Samuel Johnson and Edmund Burke, and Hall was, no doubt unconsciously, under its spell. His style has been characterized by one of his most intelligent hearers as something like a combination of Addison, Burke, and Johnson. “In the form of his writings he did not progress a step beyond the masters of the eighteenth century.” But his command of language was apparently boundless; and when spoken his sermons were not only sonorous and finished, they also sparkled with epigram, charmed with their fancy, stirred with their invective, and melted with their rare pathos.

4. His faults as a preacher were those inseparable from such an intellect. He was too much addicted to abstract thought and reasoning. His style lacked compression, and was almost too uniform in its stateliness. His preaching, to judge it by his extant sermons, convinces us that we are in the presence of a mind of the

first order, but also that he cares for his theme more than he cares for his audience. His friend John Foster said that Robert Hall knew man but not men.

5. This was not the case with him when in the ease of the study or the parlor, his bow unbent, he exchanged the strain of severe thought for the society of his friends. Few men conversed better, and certainly very few with a brighter wit. Of a certain time-serving bishop he said : " Poor man ! I pity him. He married public virtue in his early days, but seemed forever afterwards to be quarreling with his wife." " In matters of conscience," he decided, " first thoughts are best ; in matters of prudence the last." Perhaps it was on this same occasion that a lady when asked to subscribe to a charity said that she would wait and see : " She is watching," said Robert Hall, " not to do good, but to escape from it." A certain minister of his acquaintance, who belonged to the class that should either be always or never in the pulpit, he characterized by saying : " The head of —— is so full of everything but religion, one might be tempted to fancy he had a Sunday soul, which he screws on in due time and takes off every Monday morning."

6. Robert Hall shares the fate of most famous preachers, in that the tradition of his eloquence is not entirely sustained by his published works. Especially is this so in his case because in no instance is the sermon in print the same that it was when it was delivered, *e. g.*, " Modern Infidelity," and, in a less degree, the sermon on " The Death of the Princess Charlotte." Henry Rogers explains this by saying :¹ " The few dis-

¹ Henry Rogers, " Essays," Vol. II., p. 241. Cottles' " Coleridge," Vol. I., p. 105.

courses which he so elaborately prepared for the press, are full of exquisite thought, expressed in most exquisite language ; but the style is almost everywhere that of disquisition. There can be little difficulty in affirming that, in this one point of view, many of the sermons which were imperfectly taken down in shorthand from his own lips, are superior to the most polished of those compositions which he slowly elaborated for the press."

7. Of his appearance in the pulpit, his friend and biographer, Dr. Gregory, wrote : " Mr. Hall began with hesitation, and often in a very low and feeble voice. As he proceeded, his manner became easy, graceful, and at last highly impassioned ; his voice also acquired more flexibility, body, and sweetness ; and in all his happier and more successful efforts, swelled into a stream of the most touching and impressive melody. The further he advanced the more spontaneous, natural, and free from labor seemed the progression of thought."

For the description of a sermon preached in a Northampton village we are indebted to E. Paxton Hood :¹

The minister came in, a simple, heavy, but still impressive-looking man, one whose presence compelled you to look at him. In due course he announced his text : "The end of all things is at hand ; be sober and watch," etc. His voice was thin and weak. There was no action at all, or only a kind of nervous twitching of the fingers ; more especially as the hand moved and rested upon the lower part of the back, where the speaker was suffering almost incessant pain. As he went on beneath the deepening evening shades falling through the windows of the old chapel, his voice first chained, then charmed and fascinated his hearers one after another ; the whole place seemed as if beneath a great spell. As he talked about "the end," the spell upon the people seemed

¹ "Lamps, Pitchers, and Trumpets."

to begin to work itself out into an awful, fearful restlessness ; first one, then another, rose from his seat and stood stretching forward with a kind of fright and wonder. Still there was no action, only the flowing on of that thin voice, with a marvelous witchery of apt and melodious words, but through them "the end of all things" sounded like some warning bell. More people rose, stretching forward. Many of those who rose first, as if they felt some strange power upon them, they knew not what, got up and stood upon their seats, until, when the great master ceased, closing his passionate and pathetic accents, the whole audience was upon its feet, intensely alive with interest, as if each one had heard in the distance the presages and preludes of the coming end, and felt that it was time to prepare.

II. John Foster (1770-1843). Reference has already been made to John Foster, the friend of Robert Hall, and during his later years at Bristol his neighbor. Each was so modest that he shrank from having the other hear him, and it was only by concealing himself in the vestry that Robert Hall succeeded in listening to the weekly lectures, which were really sermons, that John Foster was delivering in Bristol. Foster was, as Dr. Austin Phelps puts it, "the illustrious thinker but not illustrious preacher." He had no superior as an essayist in the days when the essay as a form of composition was most popular. But when he rose to speak his words, although they might glow in his mind, fell like icicles from his lips.

III. Andrew Fuller (1754-1815). A preacher unlike either Hall or Foster, was Andrew Fuller. "The Franklin of theology," as he has been called, to Fuller belongs the distinction of rescuing the Calvinism of his generation from the extreme into which it was running, and formulating in strong and simple language the the-

ology which he embodied in his admirable treatise, "The Gospel Worthy of all Acceptation." By furnishing a system against which neither the heart nor the intellect revolted, Andrew Fuller did an incalculable service to the pulpit of his time. His own sermons were weighty, logical, and grave; he had not the finish of Foster nor the splendor of Hall, but his simple and vigorous style expressed simple and vigorous thought; that he was an effective preacher may be inferred from the fact that when Thomas Chalmers listened to him he resolved to so far make Fuller his model that he would never again read a sermon, but henceforth trust to extemporaneous delivery. Andrew Fuller had such a conception of the solemnity of his office as certainly deserves our imitation, whatever we may think of his method of preaching. "The pulpit," he writes in his diary, "is an awful place; we preach for eternity." The little village church of which he was the minister in his earlier years numbered only forty members, and could offer him a pittance barely enough to live on, but again and again he declined calls elsewhere, and when at last he decided that he must leave, it was only after two years of anxious thought. "Men who fear not God," says Dr. Ryland, "would risk an empire with fewer searchings of heart than it cost Fuller to leave a little church, hardly containing forty members besides himself and his wife."

IV. William Carey (1761-1834). It was Andrew Fuller who more than any other one man sustained William Carey in his missionary enterprise. "You go down into the pit," he said, "and we will hold the ropes." The sermon which Carey preached on the theme, "Ex-

pect great Things from God ; Attempt great Things for God," if judged by its fruits must be esteemed one of the greatest discourses ever delivered,¹ and it is interesting to know that it was to Jonathan Edwards, the most impressive of American preachers, that the impulse to preach the gospel to the heathen was in no small measure due. Edwards' pamphlet on the necessity for united prayer for the revival of religion and the advancement of Christ's kingdom in earth was reprinted by John Sutcliffe, a Baptist minister, closely associated with Hall and Fuller, and without any doubt quickened in the hearts of British Christians a sense of their duty to evangelize the world.

V. Minor Scottish Preachers. In Scotland, to which we now turn, the chain of evangelical preachers was never broken. The successors of John Knox were such men as we have already referred to : David Dickson (b. 1583), who showed his hearer "all his own heart" ; and Samuel Rutherford (b. 1600), who called on the woods and trees and meadows and hills of Anworth to witness how he had wrestled with the angel of promise for his people's welfare ; and John Livingstone (1603), "the most popular preacher of his time," under whose one memorable service at the Kirk of Shotts five hundred persons were converted. It is true that later Scotland had its "Moderates," who extolled the rhetoric of Blair and deprecated spiritual zeal, but she could recall the memory of Thomas Boston (1676), whose sermons are full of Christ ; and the two Erskines, Ebenezer and Ralph (b. 1680, 1683)—Ralph the more fervid and impassioned, Ebenezer the more stately and dignified, yet winning from David Hume the exclam-

¹ Isa. 54 : 2, 3.

mation, "That's the man for me. He speaks as if Jesus Christ were at his elbow." She had John MacLaurin (b. 1693), whose sermon on "Glorying in the Cross" remains one of the noblest in the language; and John Witherspoon (b. 1722), who was the sworn enemy of Moderation, and later coming to America became famous as one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence; and John Erskine (b. 1721), who, as much as Witherspoon, sympathized with the heroes of the Revolution and was the first in Scotland to lift his voice against the injustice of the war which Great Britain was waging with her colonies across the Atlantic. Erskine was the correspondent of Jonathan Edwards and the champion of missions against the Moderates. It is Erskine who lives in the encomium passed on him by Guy Mannering in Scott's novel: "Such must have been the preachers to whose unfearing minds and acute though sometimes rudely exercised talents we owe the Reformation." The list may be completed with the addition of the name of Andrew Thomson (b. 1779), who "brought back culture into the pulpit without in the least degree obscuring the cross," and to whom belongs the retort upon a brother minister who said to him, "I wonder you spend so much time on your sermons, with your ability and ready speech. Many's the time I've both written a sermon and killed a salmon before breakfast." "Well, sir," was Thomson's reply, "I would rather have eaten your salmon than listened to your sermon."¹

"A country," says Thomas Carlyle, "where the entire people is, or even once has been, laid hold of, filled

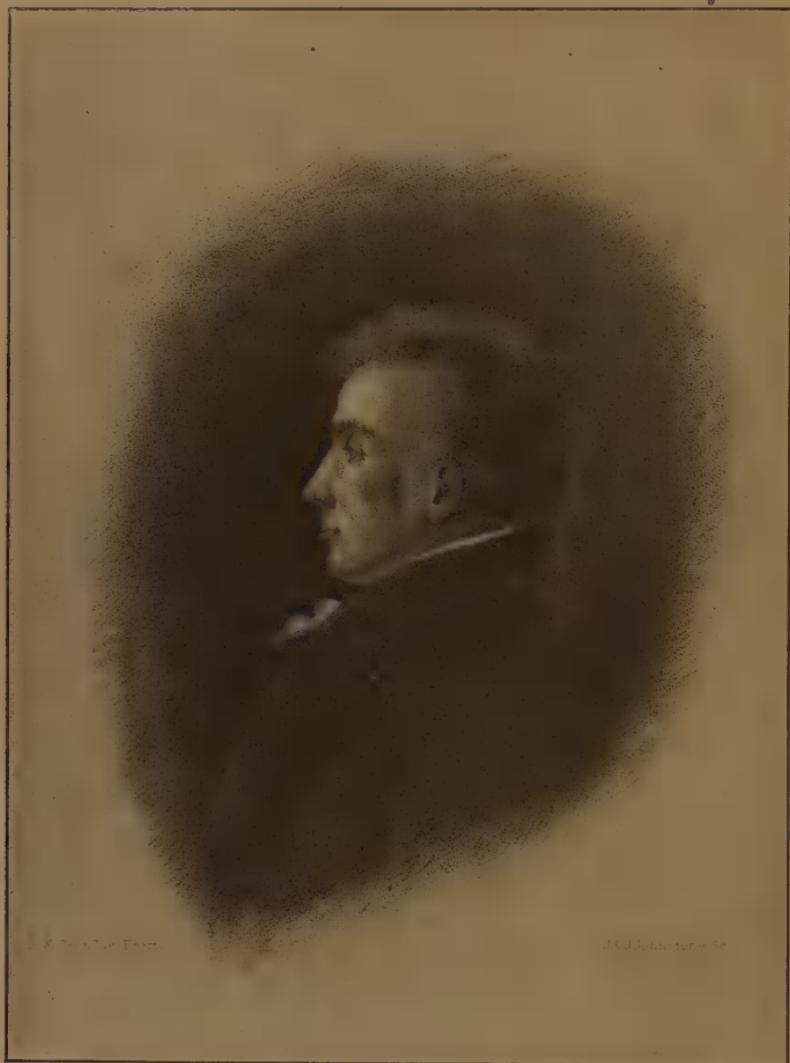
¹ W. M. Taylor, "The Scottish Pulpit," Chap. V.

in its heart with an infinite religious idea, has made a step from which it cannot retrograde." Of no country is this more true than of Scotland. There the people had won their civil liberties by loyalty to their religious convictions. During the eighteenth century the tastes of the cultured class, including the clergy, were literary and scientific rather than religious, and this gave to men of the type represented by Hugh Blair their chance to enjoy a transient fame as pulpit orators. But transient it was bound to be. The new life which Wesley and Whitefield gave to preaching in England reached Scotland. There Whitefield won some of his greatest victories as a winner of souls. It was, however, to one of her own sons, himself born in an atmosphere of Moderatism, and at first inclined to yield to it, that Scotland owed the renaissance of evangelical preaching.

VI. Thomas Chalmers (1780-1847). I. That Thomas Chalmers was "a lad of pregnant parts"¹ is shown by the fact that at the age of twelve he entered the University of St. Andrews. When after a few years it came to his turn as a student of divinity to conduct prayers, the townspeople would flock to the assembly room to hear him. His prayers were eloquent descriptions of the divine attributes, they corruscated with splendid dissertation, but they were "the intellectual efforts of a Deist and they had nothing in them of the humble supplications of a sinner or of the lofty communion of a saint."² And yet already he was under the influence of Jonathan Edwards, whose treatise on "The Freedom of the Will," so fascinated him that he "spent a twelvemonth in a sort of mental elysium," reveling

¹ See his "Life," by Hanna.

² W. M. Taylor, p. 196.



THOMAS CHALMERS

in the thought of the love and wisdom and all-pervading energy of God. At nineteen he was licensed to preach, and at twenty-two settled over the parish of Kilmany. His ambition was to teach mathematics. Already he had made himself a name as a scientist, and soon after he attracted attention by his powers as a debater, and was writing the article "Christianity" for the "Encyclopædia Britannica." All this while, by his own confession, he was a stranger to vital religion, and while pressing home on his people the need of reformation by character he "never once heard of any such reformation having been effected among them." A long and dangerous illness laid him aside from work, and it was during his recovery that he took up William Wilberforce's "Practical View of Christianity." He was converted as he read, and from that time onward his watchword was not reformation but regeneration.

When he was able to resume his pulpit work once more his people saw that another man was before them. The fame of his preaching soon spread through the neighborhood. The rustic church was crowded. As he went from house to house in his parish he carried the temper of a little child. He got as much as he gave. "You have taught me," he said in his parting sermon to his first flock, "that to preach Christ is the only effective way of preaching morality in all its branches, and out of your humble cottages have I gathered a lesson which I pray God I may be enabled to carry with all its simplicity into a wider theatre, and to bring to bear with all the power of its subduing efficacy upon the vices of a more crowded population." The reference in the closing words is to Glasgow, where he toiled for the next eight years, or-

ganizing a system of parochial visitation, grappling with the sins and sorrows of the great city, pondering over the economic problems which faced him in the teeming tenements, and carrying the hand of the philanthropist, the mind of the statesman, and the heart of the Christian pastor from floor to floor and family to family in the tall houses where his parishioners lived and labored. Chalmers almost at once became known as the great preacher of his time, and it was his distinction that while he brought back the culture of his day to the old gospel, he did so at no sacrifice of fidelity to the common people.

It was also a distinguishing feature in his preaching that he faced and discussed the social problems of the hour. His "Commercial Discourses" deal with everyday problems, while, as if to show how wide the range of revealed religion, he delivered on Thursday afternoons the famous "Astronomical Discourses," which at the busiest hour of the day thronged his church with the merchants of Glasgow, and blocked the street with eager crowds that waited to catch through the open windows the message of the greatest preacher to whom the city had ever listened.

Worn out with the strain of incessant labors, Chalmers passed from the pulpit to the classroom, and became a professor, first in St. Andrews, then in Edinburgh, and although he never ceased to preach he never again took charge of a parish. In a sense, indeed, of him as of Wesley it was true that the world was his parish. He led the party which left the Established Church of Scotland to form the Free Church, but he did it in no rancorous spirit. "Who cares," he said,

“about the Free Church compared with the Christian good of the people of Scotland? Who cares about any church but as an instrument of Christian good?” True to this sentiment, his last labors were in a tanner’s loft in Edinburgh, which he rented for a hall among the outcast and depraved of the population, and where he preached to the perishing. This was another experiment in territorial organization, and its success he counted “the most joyful event in my life.” The man who was still the most popular preacher in his own country, and whose name could fill to overflowing any church in England, had the desire of his heart in ministering to poor people who knew little or nothing of his fame, and one of whom said when asked if she ever went to church, “Yes, just to the tannery hall ower by; ane Chalmers preaches; I like to encourage him—puir body!”

2. The preaching of Chalmers was saturated by his personality. “You can separate most men from their oratory,” says one of his hearers speaking of a sermon preached about three months before his death,¹ “but not Chalmers, for he was not so much the orator as the oratory. His body, soul, and spirit, his heart and intellect and imagination were altogether in it. As he proceeded, the huskiness of his voice and hesitation of manner vanished, and the barbarous pronunciation was forgotten, and there with blazing face and eye he stood before you like one possessed by a divine spirit, rolling out in great sentences the glorious truths which he had set himself to expound and enforce. You were thrilled and carried along as you had never been before, and

¹ “The British Weekly,” 1889.

you felt that this man is the great power of God." The man himself was more and greater than his preaching. Glasgow and Edinburgh witnessed to his rare ability as an economist; before the House of Lords he gave testimony as to the best way to meet the problems presented by the overcrowded city; the Free Church was largely molded in its early years by his wise and farsighted counsels; thousands of students the land over had sat at his feet in the college and divinity schools; and all the while his rugged adherence to righteousness was tempered by a childlike simplicity and affection. "We thought," Carlyle wrote of him when the snows of winter were on his head, "we had hardly ever seen a finer looking old man, so peaceable, so hopeful, modest, pious." The strength and gentleness so finely blended in his own nature may be described in his own words, when, speaking of his friend, Andrew Thomson, he said: "This union is often exemplified in those Alpine wilds where beauty may at times be seen embosomed in the lap of grandeur; as when at the base of a lofty precipice some spot of verdure, or peaceful cottage house seems to smile in more intense loveliness because of the towering strength and magnificence which are behind it."

3. To his amazing power in the pulpit we have abundant testimony. Listening to him, Lord Jeffrey, one of the foremost orators of his age, and the editor of the "Edinburgh Review," was reminded "of what one reads as the effect of the eloquence of Demosthenes." "All the world wild about Doctor Chalmers," writes the lively Wilberforce in 1817. Canning, the greatest of parliamentary leaders, was melted to tears as he

heard him, and slipping out of the church cried, "The tartan beats us all!"

4. Yet there was much in Chalmers which would seem to militate against his success. His dialect was intensely Scotch. He read closely, and the same sermon would be repeated many times. His style was cumbrous and pedantic, and his sentences lacked balance, and sometimes ran to an inordinate length. One of them has in it as many as four hundred words.

5. These defects were, however, counterbalanced by rare excellencies. If he was provincial in his dialect it was a dialect capable of vast and varied expression. If he read, it was, as an old Scotch woman said, "fell readin'," for he read through the paper, and "his sermons were written to be preached by the man himself." If his sentences were long and involved this came from his tremendous earnestness, and it was certain that sooner or later the impetuous torrent would drive its way through the rocks and reach the calm beyond. He had great powers of abstraction, so that he could compose his sermons in moments snatched from travel or amid the interruptions of a life of many engagements. Indeed his concentration was so intense that the subject of the hour seemed to be the one subject of paramount importance. "After parting with you," wrote Andrew Fuller, "I was struck with the importance which many attach to a single mind receiving an evangelical impression." The importance was especially illustrated in Chalmers, because whatever impressed him did so with a force that made the impression supreme. In his sermons there is little advance. Robert Hall compared them to the motion of the rocking-horse,

which moves but does not go on. But the one idea with which he starts is set in every possible light, illustrated with great brilliancy, and emphasized with resistless force. The weight in his sermon is due to masculine intellect, a choice of great themes, a breadth and firmness of grasp which binds the preacher to his subject and forces the hearer to submit to be bound as well. An American hearer¹ notes in Chalmers "a straightforwardness of delivery, as if his sole object were to communicate a conviction with which his own mind was charged." The movement in his sermons comes from its intellectual impetuosity, from the entire surrender of the preacher to his theme, from his affluent imagination, and his abandonment to the feelings of the moment.

"I heard that sermon," writes Dean Ramsay of a plea for the orphaned children of the clergy, "and the tears of the father and the preacher fell like rain drops on the manuscript." But the tremendous power of Chalmers' preaching lies in this: that the weight is all in one direction, and is intended to carry one point; that the movement never for an instant ceases to revolve about one thought and that thought one of the first importance. The effect of his peroration, when this one thought was finally pressed home, is thus described by Doctor Wardlaw, of Glasgow, himself a preacher of great eloquence: "It was a transcendently grand—a glorious burst. Intense emotion beamed from his countenance. I cannot describe the appearance of his face better than by saying, as Foster said of Hall's, it was 'lighted up almost into a glare.' The congregation, in so far as the

¹ Ezra Stiles Gannett.

spell under which I was allowed me to observe them, were intensely excited, leaning forward in the pews like a forest bending under the power of the hurricane—looking steadfastly at the preacher, and listening in breathless wonderment."

6. We are indebted to Dr. John Brown, the charming author of "Spare Hours," for the most graphic picture of the great preacher. He recalls the time when as a high-school boy, he heard him during a holiday in the valley of the Tweed :

As we entered the kirk we saw a notorious character, a drover, who had much of the brutal look of what he worked in, with the knowing eye of a man of the city, a sort of big Peter Bell.

There was a hardness in his cheek ;
There was a hardness in his eye.

He was our terror, and we not only wondered, but were afraid when we saw him going in. The minister came in, homely in his dress and gait, but having a great look about him, like a mountain among hills. He looked vaguely around upon his audience as if he saw in it one great object, not many. . . Then he gave out his text ; we forgot it, but the subject was "Death reigns." He stated slowly, calmly, the simple meanings of his words, then suddenly he started and looked like a man who had seen some great sight and was breathless to declare it. He told us how death reigned—everywhere, at all times, in all places, how we all knew it, how we would yet know more of it. After overwhelming us with proofs of the reign of death, and after shrieking, as if in despair these words, "Death is a tremendous necessity !" he suddenly looked beyond, as if into some distant region and cried out, "Behold ! A mightier ! Who is this ? He cometh from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah, traveling in the greatness of his strength, mighty to save." Then he took fire and enforced with redoubled energy and richness, the freeness, the simplicity, the security, the sufficiency, of the great method of justification. How

astonished and impressed we all were ! He was at the full thunder of his power, the whole man was in an agony of earnestness. The drover was weeping like a child, the tears were running down his ruddy, coarse cheeks, his face opened out, and smoothed like an infant's, his whole body stirred with emotion, and when the wonderful speaker sat down, how beautiful to our eyes did the thunderer look. We went home quieter than we came ; we thought of other things ; that voice, that face, those great, simple, living thoughts, those floods of resistless eloquence, that piercing, shattering voice !

VII. *Edward Irving (1792-1834).* With Chalmers was associated as his assistant during the Glasgow ministry a preacher who was at one time as famous as he for pulpit eloquence, Edward Irving. His brief but brilliant career is full of pathetic interest. He was on the point of sailing for America, disheartened because of his apparent failure in the ministry, when he received a call to Glasgow ; and thence from acting as assistant to the foremost preacher in the city, he was invited to London, to take charge of an obscure handful of Highlanders in a quiet by-street to whom their native Gaelic was inexpressibly musical. Irving could not preach in Gaelic, but the little band of compatriots consented to listen to him in English, and he marched to the great metropolis bent as he said on making "a demonstration for a higher style of Christianity, something more magnanimous than this age affects." In a very short time London became aware of this new prophet. The little church was crowded to the doors. The carriages of the nobility lined up before the obscure meeting-house. Members of Parliament stood in the throng, and were content to stand if only they could hear this man who was indeed making a demonstration for a higher style

of Christianity. Irving "had a remarkably fine figure and face," Crabbe Robinson,¹ who was often in his company, wrote in his "Reminiscences," "and it was a question with the ladies whether his squint was a grace or deformity. My answer would have been, It enhances the effect either way. He might stand as a model for St. John the Baptist—indeed for any saint dwelling in the wilderness and feeding on locusts and wild honey. Those who take an impression unpropitious to him might liken him to an Italian bandit. He has a powerful voice, feels always warmly, is prompt in his expression, and not very careful of his words."

The sudden popularity which lifted him on the crest of its wave proved as severe a test to Irving as it has to other men before and since. His eccentricities became more marked, his mistakes of judgment more disastrous, and he had not long moved with his congregation into the spacious church which was built for them, when, under the pressure of distorted views of prophecy, his mind lost its balance, and he gave in his adherence to a belief in the bestowment of the gift of tongues first in Scotland and then even in his own congregation. Then followed disruption, the great preacher became the leader of a new denomination (which in its after course has failed to make "a demonstration for a higher style of Christianity") and after a few years of futile but splendid evangelization, he died a broken-hearted man, tender and true to the last, although the victim of unsubstantial religious vagaries, and lies at rest in the crypt of Glasgow cathedral.

It was during the full flow of the London popularity

¹ "Diary," etc., p. 488.

that Irving preached in Edinburgh every morning, during the sessions of the General Assembly, at six o'clock. Doctor Begg, who subsequently rose to be a leader in the Presbyterian ranks, has left us this description of the scene :

Being anxious to hear the celebrated man, I was up every morning with the lark, and walked into Edinburgh in time to secure admission to the church with the first of the crowd. Every corner of the immense building was crammed long before the commencement of worship. As soon as the hour struck an unusually tall figure was seen emerging from the vestry and making his way through the crowded aisles, towering above the people head and shoulders, like Saul. His hair was parted in front, and his beautifully chiselled face was somewhat marred by a remarkable squint in one of his dark, expressive eyes. But otherwise he was very fine looking. When he reached the pulpit he solemnly opened the psalm-book, bent back its boards, turned up his cuffs and wristbands, and proceeded to read the Psalms with a powerful, sonorous, but modulated voice, which rivaled the deep bass of the finest organ. I often thought it was worth while my whole journey to town, even at that early hour, to hear the way in which he rolled out the forty-fifth Psalm, apparently one of his greatest favorites :

O thou, that art the Mighty One,
Thy sword gird on thy thigh !

The sermons of Edward Irving will still repay study.¹ The London "Times" said truly that his was "eloquence that will bear to be read ; it is not less potent and seductive on the printed page than when it fell on listening ears." "Blackwood's Magazine," the voice of Scottish culture, considers him "the greatest preacher the world has seen since apostolic times" ; and the least sympathetic of critical journals bears witness to his sin-

¹ See his "Orations," and also "Life of Edward Irving," by Mrs. Oliphant.

cerity when it says:¹ "Irving, almost alone among recent men, lived his sermons and preached his life. His words, more than those of any other modern speaker, were life passed through the fire of thought. He said out his inmost heart, and this it is that makes his writings read like a prolonged and ideal biography."

¹ "The Saturday Review."

XII

BRITISH PREACHING IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

THERE was little promise of the wonderful future in store for it when the nineteenth century opened. Great Britain was under the influence of two national movements outside her own borders which divided the thoughtful people within them into opposing camps. Of these the first was the American War and the founding of the new republic across the Atlantic. The second was the French Revolution. Under the strain of excited patriotism the pulpit would sometimes become loud in its protestation of loyalty. Under the fervor of a passion for liberty the pulpit would at other times become equally loud in its panegyric of the American colonists and the French revolutionists. Meanwhile the fathers of the Evangelical Revival were passing away. There was no little danger that while the letter of that great movement would remain its spirit might be lost. "The evangelical reaction," says Huxley, in reviewing this period of our history, "which for a time braced English society was dying out, and a scum of rotten and hypocritical conventionalism clogged art, literature, science, and politics." Extreme though this language is, it is not entirely unjust. The Methodist revival had indeed done much for the Established Church, and yet it had scarcely done more than to reveal the crying need for reformation. In the parish churches for many years the average preaching must

have been low.¹ During the week the parson would "carouse with the squire or the farmers over the punch bowl, and on Sundays preach what Samuel Pepys would have called 'lazy dull sermons' in mouldy churches to scanty congregations." "For the last thirty years," said Bishop Horsley, in charging his clergy in 1800, "we have seen but little correspondence between the lives of men and their professions, a general indifference about the doctrines of Christianity, a general neglect of its duties."² Thinking over things which were habitual in the life of the clergy at this period, Archbishop Tait "wondered any Christian folk remained in the church at all." "Whenever you meet a clergyman of my time," said Sydney Smith, "you may be sure he is a bad clergyman." When we learn that a young man could be admitted to ordination after a few hasty questions put by a chaplain, sometimes on the cricket field or after his return from hunting, we need not be surprised that so many pulpits were occupied by inefficient and even unworthy men, from whose lips no message came. Tennyson's father was a man of a higher type, indeed, but even of him we are told that he "had no real call for the ministry, yet he faithfully strove to do his duty."³ The historian of the period sums up the case for the better class of clergy when he says that they were "men who mixed freely in social life, not perhaps giving a high spiritual tone to it, but on the whole influencing it for good."⁴

It is our present purpose to glance at the preaching

¹ "Life of Dean Hook," Vol. I., p. 139.

² Overton, "The English Church in the Nineteenth Century," p. 4.

³ "Life of Tennyson," Vol. I., p. 14. ⁴ Overton, p. 3.

of the nineteenth century in Great Britain. So far we have been speaking of the Episcopal Church, because in England it is "the Church by Law Established," and for this reason, in our survey, with its preachers we naturally begin. Though the leaders of the evangelical revival were disappearing, the ablest preachers when the nineteenth century dawned, and for many years after, were mainly evangelical. The most powerful religious influence in the University of Cambridge was Charles Simeon (b. 1758). John Wesley was his friend, and Fletcher of Madeley found in him a kindred soul. With many faults of manner and failings of temper, Simeon was a preacher of extraordinary zeal.¹ The gownsmen of the university flocked to his church, attended his "conversation parties," and made him their father confessor. He found for them curacies or chaplaincies, and furnished them with outlines which under the name of "Simeon's skeletons" rattled in evangelical pulpits for at least fifty years. He opened his church for evening service, setting an example which was speedily followed in large towns, although the clergy as a rule disliked anything which so closely resembled Methodism. The preaching at such services would in most cases be extemporaneous, and although often more remarkable for its earnestness than for its rhetoric, it would be surer to win a hearing than would the read sermons of the period, which painfully confirmed the opinion of Alexander Knox, himself a strong churchman, that "the clergy have lost the art of preaching."² Even Sydney Smith, who had no love for the evangelical preacher, preferred his "ungrammatical fer-

¹ Stevens' "History of Methodism," p. 449. ² Overton, p. 139.

vor and illiterate animation to the tedious essay, full of commonplace morality, which the ordinary parish clergyman read week by week to his flock." In Ireland, indeed, where the Episcopal Church has always inclined to evangelical views, there were preachers of a high order, fit though few, men gifted with native eloquence, who attracted multitudes to their churches.

I. Walter Blake Kirwan (1754-1805), was one of these. Originally a Catholic priest, he became a Protestant in 1787, and from that time to his death his popularity never waned. The characteristic evangelical note of the period may be caught in such words as these :

Never to appear in society but with a view to improvement and edification ; never to keep up a single acquaintance the most distantly dangerous to our spiritual intercourse ; never to cultivate friends, or even relatives, that are not religious and virtuous ; never to omit rendering, in the particular duties of our station, the means of salvation to ourselves and others, this is the gospel. To neglect occupations the most sacred and important ; to run indiscreetly and without choice into every circle that will admit us ; to consume our precious time in idle visits and ceremonials ; to live only in the confusion of night and day, amidst laborious amusements that always end in inevitable disgust, that capital enemy which we are eternally banishing and eternally calling up, this is the world. Inviolably to respect our superfluities as the patrimony of the poor ; to be distinguished in high station neither by too much magnificence nor too much simplicity, to regulate our train and expense invariably below our rank and revenues ; to think more of decency than of lustre and show, this is the gospel. To be arrayed in these things only by established fashion, however wild, extravagant, and contemptible ; to labor who shall outdo the other in excessive and luxurious entertainments ; to starve a family for a month in order to glitter for a night ; to exhibit with study and affectation brilliant and expensive baubles on the person, and the person without attire ; and unthinkingly sacrifice to vanity

what our hearts incline us to devote to a more sacred purpose, this is the world.

II. *Henry Melvill (1800-1871).* The best representative of the higher class of evangelical preachers was Henry Melvill, who was born in the first year of the new century. In his command over his congregation Gladstone considered him the greatest Episcopal preacher of his generation. Ruskin and Browning were powerfully influenced by him. Spurgeon, who must have heard him in his old age, counted him "a Demosthenes among preachers." It was the fashion to compare him with Chrysostom, whose eloquence he seems to have admired and emulated. Although never profound, Mellvill held closely to his subject, pursued it often through a train of careful reasoning to its conclusion, and based his appeal, which was close and plain, on a careful and intelligent interpretation of his text. No preacher better than he understood the use of language rich in the ornaments of rhetoric, and yet commanding itself to the sober judgment of his hearers. For many years no other London preacher so largely impressed the intelligent young men as did Henry Melvill. Among the preachers who could be said to belong to the evangelical party he was in this respect singular. The weak point in the armor of the evangelical sermon was prone to be its intellectual poverty. Here, too often, it was as poor as it was pious. To these circumstances mainly must be attributed the fact that so many men who were cradled in the evangelical faith when they grew to maturity found their spiritual home in other schools of thought, and gave their strength to other fields of action.

III. Thomas Arnold (1795-1842). Thomas Arnold had slight sympathy with the evangelical party, but he was as strongly opposed to a national church which laid special stress on apostolical succession and the priesthood of the clergy. He, more perhaps than any other one man, molded the thought of the Broad Church party in its early years, and as head master at Rugby School, through his rare personality, his high-mindedness, his moral enthusiasm, he influenced a multitude of boys who in their turn to a rare degree affected the England of the next generation. Little Arthur Stanley, a schoolboy under him, went to his room Sunday after Sunday to write down his remembrances of the famous Rugby Chapel sermons, which still remain models of their kind. "Tom Brown's School Days" and Matthew Arnold's touching sonnet on "Rugby Chapel" are the memorials of an influence which at the most sensitive and formative period of life always made for God and the highest good. How true are some of the lines in that great poem the history of the next generation proved :

Therefore to thee it was given
Many to save with thyself ;
And at the end of thy day,
O faithful shepherd ! to come,
Bringing thy sheep in thy hand.

IV. Julius Hare (1795-1855). To the same school belonged Julius Hare, whose library, in the old family living of Hurstmonceaux, in the county of Sussex, was rich in German literature, as became the early admirer of Goethe and Schiller, and the friend of Bunsen. His course of sermons entitled "The Mission of the Com-

forter," preached at Cambridge, is still one of the best studies of a subject of paramount importance.

V. F. D. Maurice (1805-1872). Destined to influence current thought more than either Arnold or Hare was Frederick Denison Maurice, whose father was a Unitarian minister, while his mother was a strong Calvinist. Perhaps as a consequence of this unusual conjunction, the preaching of Maurice "mediated between religious attitudes that seemed to neutralize each other." In the estimation of Hare no one did so much as Maurice to reconcile the reason and the conscience of the thoughtful men of the age to the faith of the church. "It is in great measure owing to him," it was said, "that the intellect of the rising generation is with us rather than against us.¹ The evangelical faith of his childhood led him to cherish a deep horror of sin and a firm faith in the gospel of Christ as a mission of deliverance for its curse and guilt. About Maurice as he preached as the chaplain of Lincoln's Inn, London, there gathered a host of earnest and thoughtful young men. No one who worshiped there when the afternoon sun fell through the great painted windows on his broad thoughtful face, lit up by an enthusiasm for truth, with the deep-set eye which seemed to have seen all the past and to foresee all the future, can forget the impression produced by that serious, absorbed voice urging upon the young life about him the duty of meeting the problems of the hour in the spirit of men who believed in the Christ who had overcome the world. The abiding remembrance is of the beauty of holiness, and one under-

¹ "Prophets of the Christian Faith," p. 214. Cf. Peabody's "Reminiscences of Channing," p. 448.

stood why Tennyson said of him when as his visitor Maurice took the family prayers, that "his reading was the most earnest and holiest he had ever heard." Mr. Gladstone, on one occasion, insisting on the duty of preachers to lay upon the souls and consciences of their hearers their moral obligations, said: "The class of sermons which I think are most needed are of the class which offended Lord Melbourne long ago. Lord Melbourne was seen one day coming from a church in the country in a mighty fume. Finding a friend, he exclaimed: 'It is too bad! I have always been a supporter of the church and I have always upheld the clergy. But it is really too bad to have to listen to a sermon like that we have had this morning. Why, the preacher actually insisted upon applying religion to a man's private life.'" Perhaps the evangelical preaching had urged this point with an emphasis that left no time or force for any other consideration than the need of personal salvation. Against a gospel which should stop here Coleridge protested, when he warned his age against an "other worldliness" scarcely less dangerous to the soul's true life than was worldliness itself. "No man," said he, "will ever be of much use to his generation who does not apply himself mainly to the questions which are agitating those who belong to it." Maurice believed in the very thing which shocked the British nobleman. He stood for applied religion. No preacher was more penetrating in dealing with conscience, or more urgent in insisting that each man was his brother's keeper. His interest in the workingmen of London led him to give hours of his time, week by week, to lecturing to them. He became the leader of a prac-

tical socialism which did much to make life tolerable for thousands to whom it had been intolerable before.

On the same line worked Charles Kingsley (b. 1819), the great-hearted rector of Eversley, whose sermons were powerful because they were the sincere utterances of one of the strongest Englishman of his age.

A preacher whose influence has grown since his death, and who represents the scholarly rather than the popular wing of the Broad Church party was James B. Mozley (b. 1815). In the estimation of many competent judges no discourses of the century are more worthy of the attention of thoughtful men, and none more likely to receive it, than his "University Sermons."

VI. F. W. Robertson (1816-1853). Frederick William Robertson was little more than thirty-six years of age when he died at Brighton in August, 1853. Beyond the circle of his own friends and of his own congregation his name was scarcely known. Only one or two of his sermons had been published. His brief ministry, with the exception of a curacy at Cheltenham and a few months of service at Oxford, had been all given to Brighton, where the fashionable throng had gone elsewhere than to his chapel, leaving their places to be filled with a crowd of earnest men and women, many of them from what in England it is usual to call the working classes, and many of them, also, rarely seen within the doors of a place of worship. His later years were overshadowed by disease, distracted by the petty opposition of ritualist and sectary within his own church, and saddened by the disappointment which an oversensitive nature is apt to feel because its high ideals fail of accomplishment. The history of preaching can



FREDERICK W. ROBERTSON.

show no parallel to the posthumous influence exerted by Robertson on the British pulpit. "He has become," said Dean Stanley in 1881, "beyond question the greatest preacher of the nineteenth century." Tennyson, his senior by a few years, had met him in his earlier ministry, and had become his follower so far as he could be the follower of any one man, or as Robertson himself would admit of having a follower. The religious life of Tennyson had certainly been powerfully affected by him, and it would be difficult to decide how much "*In Memoriam*," the most influential religious poem of the century, bears the impress of his teaching and that of Maurice. What he was to Tennyson, Robertson was to thousands of thoughtful persons of his own and the succeeding generation. To-day he stands out as the man of all others who has shown us how to make sermons, not by copying his methods but by going for our message where he went for his, and so delivering it that the permanent impression should be of the message rather than of the messenger. One of his frequent hearers¹ wrote of him as "uniting the greatest number of excellencies, originality, piety, freedom of thought, and warmth of love. His style was colloquial and very scriptural. He combined light of the intellect with warmth of the affections in a pre-eminent degree."

Robertson was the son and grandson of military men, and his own ambition was to be a soldier. To the last he could not read the story of a battle without having his blood stirred, and longing himself to be in the thick of the fight. His father's wish made him a clergyman, but he showed very little of the conven-

¹ Henry Crabbe Robinson, "Diary," p. 430.

tional minister of religion whether in the pulpit or out of it. In his sermons we find not the theology of the schools but the religion of his own experience as a student of the Bible and of the human heart.¹ Truth, he held, should be taught not dogmatically but suggestively. The preacher's aim should be to establish truth rather than to destroy error. Spiritual truth is discerned by the spirit, not intellectually by propositions. Faith in the human character of our Lord must precede belief in his divine origin. Christianity works from the inward to the outward. He insisted that there was a soul of goodness in things evil, and that the preacher's aim should be to discover what this is, and to clear it from the error which encrusted it. This conviction "ruled his life, his estimate of men and his action upon them, as well as his view of the world, of history, and of nature." The clearness and force with which Robertson preached these principles were immensely increased from the fact, with which every hearer of his must very soon have been impressed, that they were his own, bought at the price of severe and often painful mental and spiritual conflict.

I. This power in the pulpit was not due to any marked grace of manner although he had the ease of a gentleman; or to his voice, for his tones were at first apparently somewhat affected; or to his use of the rhetorician's arts and devices, to which he was incapable of stooping; or even to his eloquence of speech, for while the few sermons of his which are sufficiently full to allow us to judge of his language, impress us with

¹ Stopford A. Brooke, "Life and Letters of F. W. Robertson," Vol. II., Chap. 3.

the fitness of his words, they do not seem the words of an orator. We are held by the thought rather than by the language in which that thought finds expression.

2. His intellectual traits are a quickness of insight into the truth he is discussing, a power of simple but sufficient analysis, and a style clear and unaffected. His own phrase as to one subject expresses his method of treating all : "Putting aside the form of the narrative, and looking into the heart and meaning of it." The text with him is no motto, but the message of the occasion. On it he bases his divisions—oftener than not there are but two—as from it he has extracted his theme. No preacher ever honored the words of Scripture more than he. "He seems to come at the vital source of the passage through patient thought and fresh, original exegesis."

3. In his preaching, as in his life, the man was inseparable from the speaker. Robertson's moral nature was singularly noble and sincere, it was extremely sympathetic, and morbidly sensitive. "It gave me pleasure," he wrote on one occasion, "to hear that what I said on Sunday had been felt, not that it had been admired." His deep melancholy impressed Dr. Malan, the Swiss Protestant minister, when he met him. "My dear brother," he said, "you will have a sorrowful life and a sorrowful ministry." Robertson's comment on this is pathetically true of a nature too delicately strung to escape martyrdom : "It may be so, but present peace is of little consequence. If we sin we must be miserable; but if we be God's own that misery will not last long; misery for sin is better worth having than peace." Already there was creeping over him the shadow of the agonizing dis-

ease of the brain which ultimately killed him. At the last he could only whisper, "Let me rest. I must die. Let God do his work." To an unusual extent he entered into the difficulties of others: "My misfortune or happiness," he says, "is power of sympathy." That this ensured a life of great suffering to one so sensitive as he will be apparent when we add to the characteristics already encountered a military ideal of duty. A soldier whose whole business it is to "do and die" at the command of his captain was he who in common with Loyola and Wesley carried the military conception of life through all his ministry.

4. His spiritual qualities were devotion and reverence, a religious instinct jealously preserved and cultivated, and an ambition to bring his love for the noble and true in art and in literature and nature, his deep interest in the battle of life, the struggle of humanity, the great social and political movements of the age, all into captivity to the obedience of Christ.¹ In his own words: "Of one thing I have become distinctly conscious; that my motto for life, my whole heart's expression is 'None but Christ'; . . . to feel as he felt, to judge the world and the estimate of the world's maxims as he judged and estimated. This is the one thing worth living for."

5. Robertson carried with him into the pulpit only a small piece of paper, on which a few notes had been written, and even this before long, in the intensity of his thought, was crumpled up in his clenched hand, and of no further use. On Monday he not infrequently recalled his sermons of the previous day, and wrote them

¹ Pressensé, "Contemporary Portraits," p. 341.

out with some fullness. For a nature such as his probably no method could have been less wise, and toward the close of his ministry these notes are evidently less and less worthy of the preacher. Indeed, for some time before the final collapse his preaching itself carried in it a warning note for the preacher ; the strain and the suffering were too severe, and his sermons now showed little of the exuberance and joy of his earlier discourses. When published after his death the first three volumes, out of the five or six that are in print, did most justice to this great preacher to preachers. They at once sprang into fame, and for their power to transmute profound religious truth into the current coin of the pulpit they still remain peerless.

When Robertson gave it as his belief that truth should be taught suggestively rather than dogmatically, he touched on one characteristic of the Broad Church school which in its preaching was at the same time its strength and its weakness ; its strength, because human language is incapable of fully expressing religious truth, and a margin needs to be left for the play of the imagination without which no truth can be understood ; its weakness, because the final impression left by the sermon was too apt to be hazy and indistinct. The trumpet, as the adverse critics of the Broad Church preacher were apt to say, gave an uncertain sound.

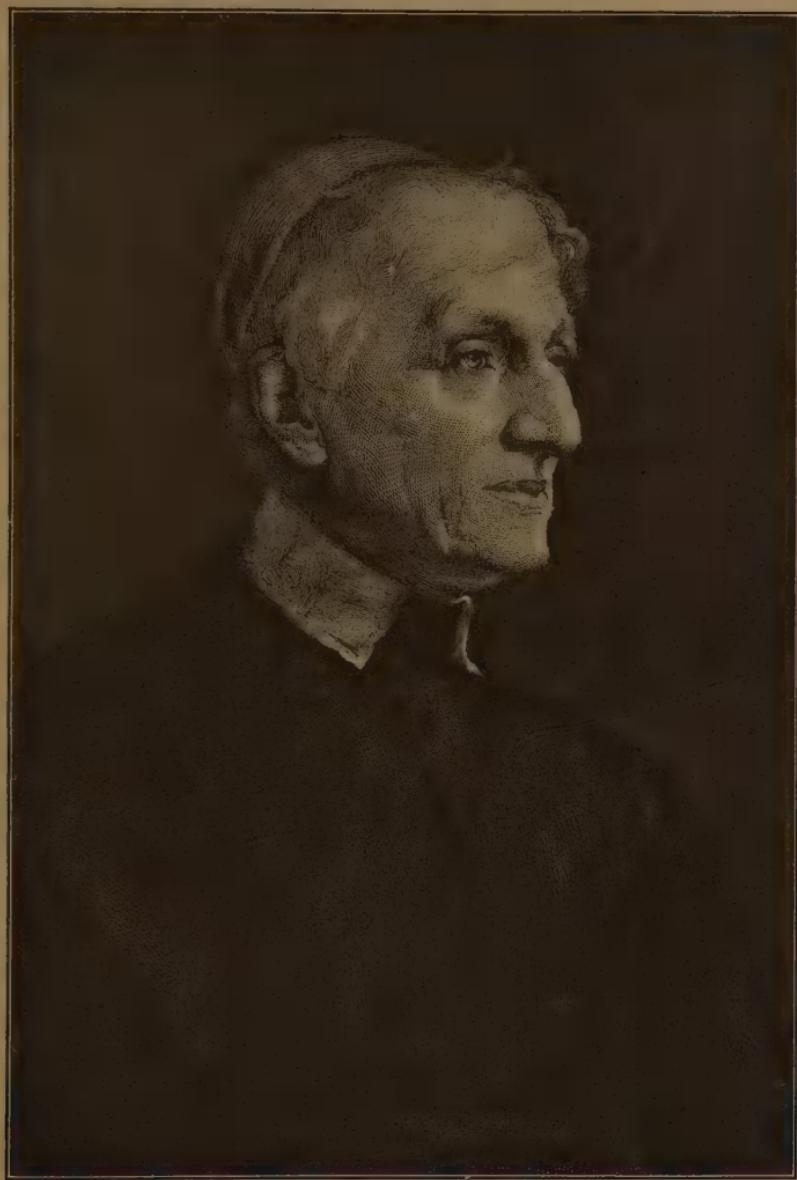
VII. W. F. Hook (1798-1875). This charge had never been brought against the evangelical preacher, whose danger lay in the opposite direction. Nor could it be brought against the High Church divine. When Dr. Hook, preaching before the young Queen of England, dared to choose as his text, "Hear the church," it was

natural to conclude that the man who could deliberately wrest Scripture in defense of his favorite dogma would be sure to define that dogma very distinctly, and with entire satisfaction to himself. Phillips Brooks considered that the Athanasian Creed hampered the mental activity and free thought of the English clergy. A considerable number of the clergy were content to be thus hampered. A passion for the Anglican Church, for its service, its ritual and its edifices, had now sprung up. This was a healthful reaction from the slovenly spirit which had been too long the shame of the Established Church, and against which the evangelical party had made little headway. The High Church movement it was that made it no longer possible for a bishop's chaplain to examine a candidate for ordination while shaving,¹ and stop the examination when the candidate had construed two Greek words ; and that changed the country clergyman from a parish politician intent on the election of the true blue Tory, and an amateur farmer deep in draining and learned in top-dressing, into what was now called a priest, attentive to his saints' days, vigorous in his homilies, and assiduous in his parish visiting.² The reform began at both Oxford and Cambridge, but it was mainly Oxford which took the lead in the movement.

VIII. E. B. Pusey (1800-1882). At first Edward Bouverie Pusey was, perhaps, more than any other one man, the mouthpiece of the new views. When it came to be his turn to preach before his university his sermons were apt to be "manifestoes marking distinct stages in the

¹ "Life of Bishop Blomfield," Vol. I., p. 59.

² Overton, p. 158-160.



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history of the party of which he was the leader." With little of the orator in his temperament, he preached sermons which were redolent of the past, often marked by tenderness and pathos, and certainly never lacking in distinctness or in daring when the dogmas of his creed had to be set forth. His sermons on "The Holy Eucharist" and "Comfort to the Penitent" (1843), caused his suspension from the function of preaching for three years, but when published they had an immediate sale of eighteen thousand copies. While the High Church party has never failed in preachers, its influence has been seen in men such as Samuel Wilberforce (b. 1805), Dean Church (b. 1815), and Archbishop Magee (b. 1821), who in their sermons sounded a note broader and more popular than one catches from the lips of Pusey and those immediately about him.

IX. J. H. Newman (1801-1890). The preacher who most powerfully influenced his hearers during the stirring years of the Oxford movement was John Henry Newman. The young men of the university hastened to St. Mary's Church when it was known that he was to occupy the pulpit. Froude, the historian, describes his appearance when he himself first entered Oxford. He notes the likeness in the head to Julius Cæsar, and finds that the likeness goes deeper than the features. "In both," he says, "there was an original force of character which refused to be molded by circumstances, which was to make its own way, and become a power in the world; a clearness of intellectual perception, a disdain for conventionalities, a temper imperious and willful, but always with it a most attaching gentleness,

sweetness, singleness of heart, and purpose." The impression made by one of his sermons he thus recalls :

" Newman was describing closely," he says, " some of the incidents of our Lord's passion ; he then paused. For a few moments there was a breathless silence. Then, in a low, clear voice, of which the faintest vibration was audible in the farthest corner of St. Mary's, he said : ' Now, I bid you recollect that he to whom these things were done, was Almighty God.' It was as if an electric shock had gone through the church, as if every person present understood for the first time the meaning of what he had all his life been saying. I suppose it was an epoch in the mental history of more than one of my contemporaries."

Gladstone, who was also an undergraduate in those days, may fill out the picture for us :

Without ostentation or effect, but by simple excellence, he was constantly drawing undergraduates more and more about him. His manner in the pulpit was one about which, if you considered it in its several parts, you would arrive at very unsatisfactory conclusions. There was not much change in the inflection of his voice ; action, there was none. His sermons were all read, and his eyes were always bent on the book. But, take the man as a whole, there was a stamp and seal upon him ; there was a solemn sweetness and music in the tone ; there was a completeness in the figure, taken together with the tone and the manner, which made even his delivery singularly attractive.

Out of the pulpit his influence on young men was not less marked. " Light-hearted undergraduates would drop their voices and whisper, ' There's Newman,' when, head thrust forward, and gaze fixed on some vision seen only by himself, with swift, noiseless step, he glided by."¹ The singularity of Newman's style, which was deliberately chosen for his purpose, undoubtedly added to the

¹ "Life of Principal Shairp," p. 59.

effect. He refused the aid of rhetoric, of which his "Idea of a University" shows him to have been a consummate master, but all the more powerfully did he affect his hearers by the subtlety of his thought, the acute casuistry of many of his arguments, and the restrained yet perceptible passion of his convictions. The head of the lawyer, it has been said of him, was joined to the heart of the saint. Dean Church, his reverent disciple, and himself a preacher of rare power, gives us this account of his university sermons :

The world knows them, has heard a great deal about them, has passed its various judgments on them. But it hardly realizes that without those sermons the movement might never have gone on, certainly would never have been what it was. Even people who heard them continually, and felt them to be different from any other sermons, hardly estimated their real power, or knew at the time the influence which the sermons were having upon them. Plain, direct, unornamented, clothed in English that was only pure and lucid, free from any faults of taste, strong in their flexibility and perfect command both of language and thought, they were the expression of a piercing and large insight into character and conscience and motives, of a sympathy at once most tender and most stern with the tempted and the wavering, of an absolute and burning faith in God and his counsels, in his love, in his judgments, in the awful glory of his generosity, and his magnificence. They made men think of the things which the preacher spoke of, and not of the sermon or the preacher.

"On the morning of the twenty-third of January, 1846," writes Newman in his "*Apologia Pro Vita Sua*," "I left Oxford for good. I have never seen it since, excepting its spires, as they are seen from the railway." He had passed over from the Anglican to the Roman Church, and from that time as a preacher,

although he lived to a great age, he was rarely heard of. But his influence on the pulpit of his generation is imperishable.

X. H. E. Manning (1807-1892). A preacher of less power who by and by followed in the same path as Newman was Henry Edward Manning. His sermons on "The Temporal Mission of the Holy Ghost," are worthy of devout study, but too often he impresses us as overmuch of a casuist; one misses in his tones the ring of sincerity, and his own mental conflict (which by no means ceased when he became a Romanist) led him to affect subjects which dealt with similar conditions. "A powerful sermon," writes J. B. Mozley, after hearing him on one occasion, "not controversial, but rather introversial, which is rather his line; that is entering into and describing states of mind and struggles within."¹

XI. H. P. Liddon (1829-1890). The preacher who first ventured to throw open the vast area of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, furnish it with rough seats, and invite the people to come in, was Henry Parry Liddon. For twenty years his sermons attracted thousands of hearers, who were arrested by a rhetoric which showed the influence of the great French preachers, especially Bourdaloue and Lacordaire; and who, once attracted, were held, even though the orator read his discourse, by "his charm of feature, his exquisite intonation, his kindling eye, his quivering pose and gestures, his fiery sarcasm, his rich humor, his delicate knowledge of the heart, and his argumentative skill." An appreciative critic of Canon Liddon first recalls Sir John Morley's remark on Macaulay that "the great secret of the best

¹ "Life of Cardinal Manning," Vol. I., p. 194.

kind of popularity is always the noble and imaginative handling of the commonplace," and says :

These words might have been written with an eye to Liddon's preaching. He too concerned himself "with the perennial truisms of the grave and the bedchamber, of shifting fortune, of the surprises of destiny, and the emptiness of the answered vow." He spoke of the great commonplaces—of God and sin, of salvation and redemption, of death and judgment ; and whatever his speech might lack, it was always informed by sincere and hearty faith. His preaching was also essentially addressed to his own time. He was keenly interested in all the movements of the day—an eager reader of newspapers ; and his ambition was that of Hermann de Jouffroi, to pour a double portion of the gospel mind into all the laws and regulations of society. In doing so he never stood on the edge of the crowd as one in advance of the rest. His pulpit was lifted up in the very midst—the center and the summit of the throng.

The audience listening to Liddon was scarcely less remarkable than was the preacher. All sorts and conditions of men gathered there, and they came from all parts of the London suburbs into the great silent city—for London proper is usually deserted on Sunday—and for the first time since Paul's Cross was the popular place of resort, three hundred years before, the voice of him who spoke was no longer a voice crying in the wilderness, but rather a voice appealing to an earnest, intelligent throng. The tinge of sacerdotalism, the unconscious assumption of being in the apostolical succession, the priestly air of one who had little sympathy with the Protestant Reformation, and gloried in calling himself an ecclesiastic, the dogmatic insistence of the schoolman whose "typical abhorrence was a misty Teutonism," all these were minor matters, which might

be blemishes or might not. What was certain was that here was a preacher who drew about him a vast crowd, thoroughly cosmopolitan and made up "of many nations and of all varieties of creeds." The intellectual power of Liddon is seen at its highest advantage not in these popular addresses, but rather in his two volumes, "Sermons Preached before the University of Oxford," and "Some Elements of Religion," the second an almost faultless model of the best kind of apologetic preaching.

XIII

BRITISH PREACHING IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY (CONTINUED)

HOW wide was the circle struck by John Wesley we have already seen. The opprobrium of being a Methodist rested on numbers of preachers who never enrolled themselves in the society founded by Wesley. Especially was this true in the Established Church. There was, however, no lack of pulpit talent in the ranks of Methodism itself.

I. R. Watson (*1781-1833*) Its theological system was admirably formulated by Richard Watson and a succession of earnest and efficient preachers trained under him and his associates which assured the popularity of the Methodist pulpit. William Bunting (b. 1779), during a long and influential career ably expounded and enforced Methodist polity. The spiritual fervor of Fletcher of Madeley seems to live again as we read William Arthur's (b. 1819) "Tongue of Fire." William Morley Punshon (b. 1824) was the popular orator of the body, and when the century drew near its close among the younger men there was an enthusiasm for the evangelization of the great cities which bore ample fruit and was itself a noble testimony to the perpetuity in the Methodist ranks of the spirit of its great founder.

II. Norman Macleod (*1812-1872*). The Established Church of Scotland, rent asunder by the great disruption led by Chalmers, was manifestly for a time poorer

for the loss of what has been truly called his "broad influence,"¹ but it gradually recovered its strength, and Norman Macleod, the ideal of Christian manliness, did much to restore to it its traditional place in the hearts of the people. A favorite with the British queen, he was equally at home when conducting a service for the hard-worked Glasgow artisan, and to him belongs the special honor of popularizing Christian literature, and exhibiting in his sermons, his writings, and his life a practical work-a-day godliness which has the promise of the life that now is as well as of that which is to come.

III. John Caird (1820-1896). John Caird may claim the distinction of preaching before the queen a sermon on "Religion and Common Life," which Dean Stanley declared to be the greatest of the century, and which when published attained an amazing circulation. Doctor Caird was a profound thinker, and a scholar who had he followed his own inclination would have remained in the seclusion of the study; but he was also a preacher uniting to a very rare degree the student and the orator. So modest that it was with difficulty that the reporters "extorted" from him his first published sermon, "The Solitariness of Christ's Sufferings," a masterpiece of pulpit eloquence, he was at the same time a most effective rhetorician, gifted with an expressive countenance, a deep sonorous voice, and gestures all the more effective because they were so infrequent. His sermons were recited after the method once habitual in Scotland, and (a rare thing in sermons) they were almost as impressive in the printed volume as they were when

¹ G. A. Smith, "Modern Criticism," etc., p. 221.

spoken from the pulpit of his church in Glasgow or in the chapel of the university of which he was for many years the principal.

IV. R. S. Candlish (1806-1873). In Edinburgh the Free Church rejoiced at the same time in the ministration of R. S. Candlish, a master of argumentative preaching, as became the man who was in a large measure the ecclesiastical lawyer of the disruption. Scotland, the home of biblical exposition, had no abler expounder than he, and although frequently called to other posts the pulpit remained to the last the place of his greatest power. "Destitute of natural oratorical gifts, and somewhat ungainly in his manner, Candlish attracted and even riveted the attention of his audience by a rare combination of intellectual keenness, emotional fervor, spiritual insight, and power of dramatic representation of character and life."

V. Thomas Guthrie (1803-1873). In the streets of Edinburgh in those days one would often encounter the tall, loose-limbed figure of Thomas Guthrie, a huge dog his chosen companion, and his face beaming with a love for all things great and small that God had made. He was the pioneer in ragged schools, the persistent advocate of total abstinence, the powerful pleader for funds with which to build churches and manses, the greatest platform speaker of his times, a master of humor and pathos, and even in his ordinary talk "uttering a simple sentence with so much feeling as to bring tears into the eyes of his listeners." But pre-eminently he was a preacher, "the most eloquent man in Europe," in the estimation of the "London Times," and certainly swaying such a power from the pulpit of Free St. George's

in Edinburgh as few men of his generation have attained to. His sermons were carefully prepared in his study. Each sentence was first spoken until it was perfectly adapted to the preacher's purpose, and then written, and the whole committed to memory. In his delivery he showed as much freedom and abandon as if the words had leaped impromptu to his lips. A painter among preachers, as he describes himself, Guthrie's pictures were often arguments. Judges and masters of metaphysics were to be seen in his congregation week by week. "Peers and peasants, citizens and strangers, millionaires and mechanics, the judge from the bench, the carter from the roadside, the high born dame, the servant maid of low degree, all for once close together," writes his colleague of the great crowd which thronged to listen to Guthrie. Few men understood as well as did he the power of a fitting illustration, and no preacher of all time has told stories in sermons with greater effect. His world was full of pictures, and every truth to him was concrete or it was nothing. At the last, as he lay dying in the arms of his sons he said: "I am just as helpless now in your arms as you once were in mine." By and by, as they lifted him up, he seemed suddenly to recall the saying of a boy who had been dug out alive from the ruins of a fallen house in the Canongate of Edinburgh. With a smile he called out, "Heave awa', lad, I'm no' dead yet!" The child's heart remained pure and simple to the last. "Just sing me a bairn's hymn," was one of his last requests, and the passion for his life-long work of preaching the gospel breathed in his final words: "Pray that I may have a speedy entrance into heaven, where we shall no

longer have to proclaim Christ, but where we shall enjoy him forever." Macaulay described him truly when in his journal he wrote, after hearing Guthrie preach: "The man is a noble, honest, and courageous specimen of humanity."

VI. John Cairns (1818-1892). A word of commendation should be added for the sermons of John Cairns, another preacher with a nature as simple as that of Guthrie, but with a mind that delighted to grapple with the great verities of the Christian faith, and with a rare facility for preaching theology in a way to be understood of the people.

VII. James Martineau (1805-1900). Perhaps this may be the best place in which to refer to a preacher who was so far Presbyterian by descent that his parents, who sprang from Huguenot stock, claimed to belong to that body, although Unitarian in their faith. James Martineau almost lived the century through. He preached in Dublin, Liverpool, and London, but never to large congregations. The discourses which in their printed form afterward influenced a multitude of lives, "Endeavors After a Christian Life," and "Hours of Thought on Sacred Things," were heard by audiences that rarely numbered fifty persons. In one aspect of his varied nature James Martineau was a mystic, and it is this aspect which is most apparent in his sermons. With such men as he the hearers are wont to be fit though few, but his discourses will remain a part of the literature of the pulpit for their keen spiritual insight, their tender sympathy with the trials and aspirations of the soul, and also for the affluence of their fancy and the perfection of their choice of language.

When the nineteenth century began, Congregationalism had at its back nearly two hundred years of sturdy independence. Affected, in common with all Protestant bodies, by the evangelical awakening, Congregationalism was too firmly grounded in the right of each man to possess himself to lose its individuality. The preachers who became famous as expounders of the evangelical faith retained their love for their own system of church polity, and Independency while spiritually renewed was still loyal to her historic faith.

VIII. William Jay (*1769-1853*). Perhaps William Jay, of Bath, should be numbered among the Congregationalists. His early life was molded by the influence of Whitefield, and his entire ministry was spent in the city which is associated with his name. Jay's sermons are models of practical textual analysis, admirably divided, and so full of quotations from Scriptures as to give color to Rowland Hill's pleasant jest that to buy them was to buy the Bible at a high figure.

IX. James Parsons (*1800-1876*). James Parsons, of York, was equally associated with the revival era, and for nearly half a century he traveled thousands of miles every year, preaching in all parts of the kingdom, never failing to crowd the largest chapel open to him, and was especially popular in London, to which he paid annual visits. His sermons are still read, and are remarkable for their rhetorical beauty, and for the perfect art with which, in common with the parliamentary orators of his earlier days —his rhetorical models—he built up his perorations. They were delivered in a voice scarcely raised above a whisper, and exacting the intensest quiet on the part of his audience, but their effect was wonderful.

X. J. A. James (1785-1859). A preacher of a more robust type, was John Angell James, who illustrates, as did Jay and Parsons, the power of provincial religious life, for he also remained throughout his life the minister of one church, watching the growth of Birmingham, and doing much to cleanse and elevate the life at the heart of manufacturing England. These men were essentially evangelical; they appealed largely to the emotions and experiences of their hearers, their sermons aimed at spiritual results, and abounded in appeal and application.

XI. Thomas Binney (1798-1874). The preacher who broke away from this conception of the sermon, modifying it to meet the new and broader life of the young century, was Thomas Binney. Called at thirty years of age to the King's Weigh House Chapel, London, Binney drew about him a congregation conspicuous for the number of thinking men in it. He dealt with the problems of life and destiny, and with the quickening forces, social and intellectual, which transformed Britain about the time when Victoria ascended the throne. For forty years, as preacher and writer, Thomas Binney did a noble work. He had no regard for the refinements and still less for the verbal affectations in which many of his contemporaries indulged. His grand figure, crowned by a leonine head and careless locks, his voice with its mingled tones of shrewdness and insistence, and his eyes which seemed at the same time to penetrate his hearer and his subject, never lost their power over a London audience. For all these years, as one of his friends testifies, there was "a voice at the King's Weigh House which went straight into

the heart of the people, and a hand of power which could write divine sentences on the wall for all who, when weighed in the balances of truth and justice, were 'found wanting.' "

XII. R. W. Dale (1829-1895). The transition from what may be called the evangelistic to the educational type in the ministry is well illustrated by contrasting John Angell James, of Birmingham, with his successor, R. W. Dale. It was not only an exchange from the freedom and fervor of extemporaneous preaching to the close adherence of the manuscript. It was much more. It was the passing from the early Methodist conception of salvation—a conception which did such invaluable work by rousing the sleeping soul and the inert conscience and the indifferent will, and charging them all with an earnestness which centered on the cry, "What must I do to be saved?"—to the broader and truer conception which inevitably grew out of it, that salvation was not alone a momentary act of faith but also a lifelong conflict with sin and aspiration after holiness, which the preacher should set himself to train in his hearers by all the resources legitimate to the pulpit. Throughout his active life Doctor Dale remained in Birmingham; one of its foremost citizens, a leader in its political reforms and in its intellectual growth, but never allowing any interest of the hour to detract from his duty to be first and foremost a preacher of Christ, the author and giver of all true life. To a scholarly and philosophical grasp of his subject, he added fine simple methods of arranging his thought; a style remarkable for its sonorous vigor and pre-eminently masculine; and a resolve that, even at the risk of frequent repetition on

the part of the preacher, his hearers should not miss his meaning. As the years passed on he gave increasing attention to exposition, and when the end came, a half-finished sermon in a practical course on the Epistle of James lay on his desk.

XIII. Joseph Parker (1830-1902). For many years the best-known Congregationalist preacher in London was Joseph Parker. It would be easy to criticise him, but it is a more grateful task to recognize the true messenger who did not fail to declare to the great metropolis of Great Britain and of the world what he deemed to be the whole counsel of God. With little of the rhetoric of the schools, Parker had an eloquence of word and gesture of which rhetoric is only the pale shadow. An affluence of thought, a richness of fancy, and a range of resource, with a strain of rare genius, combined to make him one of the great preachers of his generation. His Thursday morning service held in the City Temple, in the busiest of streets and at the hour which commerce is apt to claim as her own, was for long one of the phenomena of London. The congregation came largely from the desks and counters of the city itself, but the proportion of visitors was also considerable. To his brethren in the ministry especially, Doctor Parker was often an inspiring voice. Such words as these—among the last that he uttered—would put fresh life into many a preacher who (to recur to Whitefield's phrase) although not weary of the Lord's work was weary in it :

You cannot anticipate God. You cannot surprise the Eternal. He does not conceive of the cross as an after-device ; he does not attempt to make a Roman model into a living atonement.

The centuries come and go ; they are the breath of eternity. The very hairs of your head are all numbered. This gives us a new view of all our society reports and society operations and all our church work. "I preach," says one minister, "to a very small congregation." How do you know it is small ? Who told you to lie ? A small congregation ! Impossible ! One man is a congregation to the right preacher. One listening soul will take the fire out of him. "We only added one man to the church last year." Who was he ? "I think his name was William Carey." When you added William Carey to the church you added India and you added the world !

XIV. Charles Haddon Spurgeon (*1834-1892*). It was in the winter of 1853 that London became aware of a new voice among its preachers. New Park Street Chapel lies across the river Thames, surrounded by tanneries, breweries, and low slums. Once it had been the center of a residence population, and its illusive name suggests a time when trees grew green there, and when life was cheery and bright. Now these days were gone. The church worshiping in New Park Chapel was proud of its past. Gill (b. 1697), to whom reference has already been made, and Rippon (b. 1757), had served it with long pastorates. Influential merchants and professional men had been prominent among its members. When the church ventured to call, on a six months' probation, a young man from Cambridge, usher in a school, pastor of an obscure village church, there were brave and devoted men and women still left in its ranks ; but they were few.

1. To an empty chapel came the lad of scarcely twenty, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, who was destined for nearly forty years to hold perhaps the foremost position among English preachers. Not many months



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had he been preaching at New Park Street before the desert rejoiced and blossomed as the rose. The streets were alive with people, and the spacious chapel was crowded to suffocation. "By faith," cried the impetuous young preacher, one stifling Sunday evening, "by faith, the walls of Jericho fell down, and by faith, this wall at the back shall come down too." "Let us never hear of that again," was the observation of a domineering deacon, at the close of the sermon. "What do you mean?" the preacher retorted; "you will hear no more about it when it is done, and therefore the sooner you set about doing it, the better." That answer was characteristic of Mr. Spurgeon in those days. He was not lacking in a certain charming self-assurance. Offensive it never was, but there was a great deal of it; and it served him in good stead at the start. A polished and courtly divine inquired of him as to his ultra-Calvinism. Was it true that, in his sermons, he never invited sinners to accept salvation? "If you were in the congregation, doctor, I promise you that I would." It was not long before the young preacher adjusted his relations to his older brethren, not alone to his own denomination but to the churches at large.

2. His name suggested his origin. He sprang from Flemish Huguenots, driven from their native country by persecution and finding refuge in the flat lands in the east of England. His theology was what one would expect from his ancestry. To him it was almost as though there had been no Methodist revival. He went back of the eighteenth century, and in his doctrine and in his preaching was essentially a Puritan. While the evangelical

preachers dwelt much on faith, Spurgeon delighted in proclaiming grace, free, sovereign unmerited grace. He was steeped in Puritan literature. As time went on, his Calvinism mellowed, but it remained Calvinism to the end. Within a few years of his death, speaking to his students, he said:

We cannot give up that which wins a soul from death. I was walking on the bridge at Mentone, when a man came up carrying a large bundle of sticks, perhaps a hundred. He wanted me to buy one. Do you know what I did? (Here the speaker picked up his walking-stick and showed to his hearers.) The man touched his hat and walked off. When they come to you and want you to buy their sticks, show them the one you have got. I have been thirty years in one place, but I do not believe I should have been thirty months in one place if it had not been for the gospel. Some said Calvinism was dead. Well, a story was told of the battle of Waterloo. A color-sergeant who was killed grasped the standard so firmly that an officer seizing it was unable to extricate it from the dead man's hand. So he carried the dead man, standard and all. I cannot sever Evangelicism from Calvinism. If it be a dead man, I will take it and all.

3. It is not easy to estimate the rare combination of qualities which made Mr. Spurgeon what he was. His success in London was immediate, but to him it was no surprise. He believed when he first entered the metropolis that God had a message for him to deliver, and every time he faced his congregation his hearers were impressed with the same conviction. His popularity never waned as did Irving's; it was not fitful as was that of Whitefield. To the last there was no hall or chapel in the country large enough to hold those who desired to hear him, and in London itself he passed from New Park Street through the vicissitudes of transitory meeting-places, to the Met-

ropolitan Tabernacle, with its constant audience of four thousand five hundred people.

4. His appearance was not impressive. His figure was short, and the only redeeming feature in his face was an eye at once brilliant and kindly. But his voice was a powerful organ. Its first note, while it filled with ease the largest room, was so personal that each one of his hearers seemed to be specially addressed. Without effort he could reach as many as twenty thousand persons. It was clarion in its powers to rouse, and lacked only a pathetic note to make it perfect. Exhaustless buoyancy of spirit, and a flow of happy humor which, as in the case of the Puritans, seemed never out of place, impressed one with the conviction that his religion agreed with him and that he agreed with his religion. And no doubt that was so. He preached nothing which he had not personally apprehended, and offered truth not as a medicine to be taken for the cure of the soul, but as a food for its daily nourishment. He loved to recall a good man of his acquaintance who silenced a skeptic's questioning "Is there a God?" by the instant answer, "Why, I have known him personally for fifty years!" No one could listen to the brief invocation with which Spurgeon began his service without feeling that he knew God personally and was then in his presence.

5. His style was unexcelled in its strong, clear Saxon; and his ear for harmony was so perfect that each sentence was complete as it fell from his lips. "Had he been a writer instead of a preacher," says Mr. Crockett, the novelist, "he would have rivaled John Bunyan. He tells a story exactly as Bunyan would

have told it." The ring of sincerity, the accent of conviction which was so impressive in his preaching came no doubt first from his unquestioning belief in every part of his message. But the effect was intensified by a choice of words which, as in the case of John Bright also, were capable of one and only one meaning. "I feel," said Professor Ferrier, of Edinburgh University, as he came out from hearing him, "that it would do me good to hear the like of that, it sat so close to reality."

6. Mr. Spurgeon's mind was both quick and retentive. He gathered material rapidly, and knew where to put it so as to have it at command when needed. "It is evident," was the criticism of the "London Spectator," "that the great oratorical gifts which he undoubtedly possesses are accompanied by solid powers of thought, by imagination, and by humor."

7. The continued publication of his sermons—thirty-eight volumes were issued in his life-time, and the publication is likely to continue for some years to come—is one of the phenomena of literature. On an average thirty thousand copies of each of his printed discourses have been sold. A hundred million or more have found purchasers among all English-speaking people, and large numbers have been translated into many foreign languages. In this country, where the demand for his sermons has always been large, over half a million volumes of them have been published. There is no likelihood that the interest in his writings will die out. As acute a critic as Mr. Robertson Nicoll says: "Our children will think more of these sermons than we do; and as I get older I read them more and more. He stood at the very heart of things. As a young man he

plunged into the midst, and one of his first texts is: 'Accepted in the beloved.' His earliest sermon, indeed, was from the words, 'Unto you therefore which believe he is precious.' He had no sooner made a finish—it was in a little cottage in a Cambridge village, than an aged voice quavered out, 'Bless your dear heart, how old are you?' The sense of quiet humor saved the young preacher, for he says, 'My very solemn reply was, "You must wait till the service is over before making any such inquiries. Let us now sing."'

8. A secular journal was no doubt correct in saying that in the case of Spurgeon as of Bright, "all desire to criticise vanishes." The orator was forgotten in the prophet. When first he preached in Paris his rare but effective use of gesture won for him the praise of the French critics with *Prévost-Paradol* at their head. Matthew Arnold, little as he sympathized with "the dissenting Philistine," was glad to have heard him if only for the lesson received "in the way of speaking and management of the voice." In his early years he was often exceedingly eloquent, with an impetuous rush of words which subsequent experience, and perhaps suffering, toned down. The measured strength and sweetness of his tones in his later sermons became monotonous, and to break up the uniform harmony of his style he read Carlyle. In later years one missed also the buoyant exhilaration of his fresh young life. The strain of his long and exacting ministry, the care of various institutions connected with his church, the growth of modes of thought which to him boded ill for the purity of the faith he loved, and certainly also the inroads of the disease to which he fell a victim, all these things told seriously upon

a constitution which at the first seemed equal to every demand which he made upon its resources.

9. Spurgeon was essentially a preacher to the people. He belonged to the same class as Latimer and Bunyan and Whitefield. His nature was rich in sympathy. "I am," said he, "neither eloquent nor learned, but the Head of the church has given me sympathy with the masses, love to the poor, and the means of winning the attention of the ignorant and unenlightened. God has owned me to the most degraded and off-cast: let others serve their class; these are mine, and to them I must keep." This is not to say that all classes did not listen to him with profit, but it is to affirm that of Spurgeon as of so many of the greatest preachers it was emphatically true that "the common people heard him gladly."

10. As the shadow of constant illness deepened those who heard him, and even more those who shared his friendship, noticed how the moral beauty of his nature grew in lustre. "Of his personal goodness," wrote George John Romanes, "there is no doubt." He was often forced to leave England in search of sunshine, but his heart was in his work as much as ever. His last words at the Tabernacle were as characteristic as any that he ever uttered:¹ "If you wear the livery of Christ you will find him so meek and lowly of heart that you will find rest to your souls. There never was his like among the choicest of princes. He is always to be found in the thickest of the battle. When the wind blows cold he always takes the bleak side of the hill. The heaviest end of the cross lies ever on his shoulders.

¹ June 7, 1891.

. . . His service is life, peace, joy. Oh, that you would enter on it at once! God help you to enlist under the banner of Jesus Christ." As a model of style, rich in illustration, perfect in euphony, these sentences have rarely been excelled. As a summing up of his whole ministry, the ministry of reconciliation, they are complete.

II. During his last illness it was evident what a wonderful hold he had on the heart of Christendom. The Greek patriarch, princes, and prelates of the Roman church, archbishops and bishops of the Anglican church, the heir-apparent to the British throne, the ministers of his own and all other denominations, statesmen and merchants, with multitudes of less known but not less loving hearts were constant in the expression of their anxiety for his recovery. At Mentone, on the Mediterranean, January 31, 1892, almost at the same time when his people in London were meeting in thanksgiving for his partial recovery, the end came, and "like his namesake, Mr. Valiant-for-the-truth, 'he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.'" "The telegraph wires were speedily blocked with the multitudes of messages to Mrs. Spurgeon, the Prince and Princess of Wales being among the first to 'desire to express their deep sympathy with her in her great sorrow.'"¹

At least a hundred thousand people attended the various memorial and funeral services held at the Tabernacle, and when the coffin with the Bible which Mr. Spurgeon had long used at the Tabernacle opened at the text in Isaiah (Isa. 45:22) which had been blessed to his

¹ "Life," Vol. IV., p. 371.

conversion, passed slowly through the crowded London streets, there were many who reverted to the description of the scene which he had himself given at the close of a sermon eighteen years before (December 27, 1874):

In a little while there will be a concourse of people in the streets. Methinks I hear some one inquiring, "What are all these people waiting for?" "Do you not know? He is to be buried to-day." "And who is that?" "It is Spurgeon." "What! the man that preached at the Tabernacle?" "Yes; he is to be buried to-day." That will happen very soon; and when you see my coffin carried to the silent grave, I should like every one of you, whether converted or not, to be constrained to say, "He did earnestly urge us, in plain and simple language, not to put off the consideration of eternal things. He did entreat us to look to Christ."

12. Of his sermons as they remain to us, those issued during his lifetime were carefully revised by him, a work which occupied him through the working hours of one day in the week. These sermons fall into three periods. His early style is best seen in the sermons from their first publication to about 1859.¹ A transition period from 1860 to 1867 marks the time when he was occupied in building his Tabernacle and in other enterprises which seem to have taxed his strength, so that the best of it could not always be given to the discourses. His permanent style may be found in the sermons from 1867 on to 1891. But in every volume there are discourses of rare power, and all in greater or less degree show the affluence of his mind, and the impression of "driving downright," which Professor Ferrier noticed in his preaching. His speeches may also be commended to those who are interested in

¹ Cf. W. Williams, "Reminiscences of C. H. Spurgeon."

effective platform oratory. But, indeed, as he himself said, whether he lectured or spoke at a public meeting, he was always and everywhere a preacher.

The preaching of Mr. Spurgeon did not so much stimulate thought as furnish food for faith. Its keynote was assurance. The Puritan certitude was its strength. He was not so emphatically a teacher expounding Scripture, as a prophet proclaiming the word and will of God. His direct influence on other preachers was probably less than his influence on the throng of hearers who week by week came up from the hard toil of the average Londoner, and were inspired by his strong and confident faith to hold on their way steadfast to the end. The man who addresses eight or ten thousand persons every Sunday in the greatest city in the world is bound to be largely evangelistic. His very popularity limits his range.

XV. Alex. MacLaren (*b. 1826*). To another type of preachers belongs Alexander MacLaren, who, first for a few years at Southampton, and then since 1858 in the city of Manchester, has maintained a ministry of rare vigor and freshness. As much as Mr. Spurgeon Doctor MacLaren is also a student of the Bible. "A tower of strength," Mr. Spurgeon himself called him, "to the evangelical faith." "He," said the "Expositor," "above all his contemporaries has faithfully interpreted Scripture."

1. The theological center of his preaching is Christ. Speaking at his jubilee he said, "I have tried to preach Christ as if I believed in him, not with hesitancy, per-adventure, and limitations. The root of all is that we ourselves should feed on the truth which we preach to others." 2. Robertson, Spurgeon, and MacLaren are

alike in preferring a clear division of their subject, drawn from the words of the text, and distinctly, even formally, announced. The basis of every sermon with Alexander MacLaren is textual analysis. To this exegesis he brings a scholarship which has been carefully maintained through all the years of his ministry. He has what is so rare in the preacher, the scholar's mind coupled with the orator's heart. 3. In freshness and fertility of illustration he is certainly unexcelled by any contemporary preachers. A lover of art, and widely read in literature, keen in his observation of the daily life of the city which has long recognized him as one of her foremost citizens, he is also a passionate lover of nature, and the Highlands of his native Scotland have never lost their place in his heart. All these feed into his sermons, and make them ~~vivid~~ and picturesque, while he possesses the enviable art of making an illustration live before the eyes of his hearers by half a dozen words, or even by a mere passing allusion. 4. Through constant practice he has acquired almost absolute perfection of style. The principal of the Victoria University said once that for years Doctor MacLaren had been "one of the chief, if not the chief, literary influences in Manchester." Certainly no other preacher has drawn about him for nearly half a century a larger number of intelligent and eager-minded young men.

5. Doctor MacLaren's appearance in the pulpit is impressive. He has a face which in its profile at times suggests that of Dante, and eyes of wonderful lustre and depth, a lithe figure, gestures which while never excessive are always effective, and a voice which while

still retaining enough of the Scottish accent to make it pathetic, is even more remarkable for its power to give a sharp and crisp accentuation to certain words. For example, an Australian journalist describing his preaching when visiting that continent writes: "In the reading of that verse in John's Gospel, 'I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord,' the emphasis began with 'voice,' and the staccato movement went on through the whole passage, making it sound like the utterance of the rapt poet-seer of the olden time. That wondrously pathetic little bit in the sermon about Abraham and Isaac going up Moriah will not readily be forgotten. Here the voice changed, softened, and seemed to linger over the words, 'Where is the lamb?' while the answer, 'My son, God will provide himself a lamb,' was like the wail of a breaking heart."

6. Speaking on a public occasion, the Bishop of Manchester said: "Thirty years ago I was studying with great profit the published sermons of the man we honor to-day; and I will say this, that in an age which had been charmed and inspired by the sermons of Newman, and Robertson of Brighton, there were no published discourses which, for profundity of thought, logical arrangement, eloquence of appeal, and power over the human heart, exceeded in merit those of Doctor MacLaren." This is no singular testimony. The "Expositor" paid him the same tribute: "Our belief is that Doctor MacLaren, more than any other, except Robertson, has altered the whole manner of preaching in England and America, and that immeasurably for the better." "Like the sun," was the judgment of

another critic, "Doctor MacLaren has both light and heat; he is full of culture, yet fiery as a seraph."

7. To the excellencies of his method we must attribute their defects. The Puritan plainness of the service, its external simplicity, the entire absence of all vagueness, and the direct aim of prayer, Scripture reading, and preaching to quicken the spiritual life, keep the worshiper at a high point of tension; and the danger is that such uniform excitement exhausts him by its very intensity. For all his play of fancy and pathos and occasional humor and rare but telling sarcasm, the preacher himself is too intense. Perhaps it is fair to say that one gets an impression that MacLaren is interested first in his sermon and then in his congregation, that he uses his audience for his theme rather than his theme for the sake of his audience.

8. He has constantly insisted that the prime duty of the preacher is to preach, and has not been distinguished as a pastor. That this emphasis is right in his case no one who hears him will care to question; but it is far from being a safe rule for the majority of ministers of religion. The sermon was made for man; and not man for the sermon. The strong persuasion that he was called to be a messenger and that the place where that message is to be proclaimed is the pulpit, has made Doctor MacLaren the preacher that he is; and his pulpit has radiated an influence which goes far to justify the bounds which he has put to his work. His own words, uttered when his portrait was presented to the city of Manchester, best define his position :

I have been so convinced that I was best serving all the varied social, economical, and political interests that are dear to me by

preaching what I conceived to be the gospel of Jesus Christ, that I have limited myself to that work. I am sure, with a growing conviction day by day, that so we Christian ministers best serve our generation. But, whilst I strongly hold that my own proper work as a Christian minister is more than enough to occupy all my strength, I would still hold that it is very imperfectly done unless we Christian ministers are able to show in our own personal cases that our religion underlies and is only rightly represented when it is developed into all these other subsidiary and collateral modes of action. So, not because my sympathies are narrow, but because I believe I am best promoting the broadest interests, I say this one thing I do. My work, whatever yours may be, is, and has been for thirty-eight years, and I hope will be for a little while longer yet, to preach Jesus Christ as the King of England and the Lord of all our communities, and the Saviour and friend of the individual soul.

XIV

AMERICAN PREACHING

UNLIKE American literature, which was slow in its growth and followed closely old-world models, American preaching was a power from the first. When Sydney Smith asserted, in 1818, that the Americans had no native literature, he ignored the pulpit. The sermons preached by Pilgrim and Puritan were such as could have been preached nowhere else than in New England. They were racy of the soil.¹ Their thought and language were determined by the circumstances of colonial history. Their doctrine was "strenuously, not to say severely, Calvinistic." But it was tempered by "the essential soundness and healthiness of the English temperament"; and by the wholesome out-of-door life which was led by a people wrestling with a climate and a soil which had to be conquered before they would become the servants of man.

The early settlers in New England had running in their veins some of the best blood of the country from which they came. Many of them were scholarly in their habits. William Bradford (b. 1589), the famous governor of Plymouth colony, loved his Latin and Greek; and with an enthusiasm as rare as it is enviable, studied Hebrew because "he would see with his own eyes the ancient oracles of God in their native

¹ G. L. Walker, "Some Aspects of the Religious Life of New England," p. 16.

beauty." The men whom the colonists brought with them to be their ministers did not leave their country for their country's good. It would have been much more for their country's good had they remained at home. The standard of preaching under James I. and Charles, his son, was lowered by the loss of them. A Parliamentary Survey of the Churches in Leicestershire, England, about the time with which we are now dealing finds three sorts of ministers in the county, "Preachers, No Preachers, and Men of Scandalous Lives." With pitiless frankness the report further divides the first class into "sufficient, 102; weak and unprofitable, 25; careless and negligent, 20; corrupt and unsound, 6." In New England the minister was likely to be a true man and a good preacher. ("My fathers and brethren," said the scholarly John Higginson,¹ "this is never to be forgotten, that our New England is originally a plantation of religion, and not a plantation of trade.) If any man among us make religion as twelve and the world as thirteen, let such a man know that he hath neither the spirit of a true New England man nor yet of a sincere Christian."

These early ministers were as a rule men of studious tastes and accustomed to learning. They were scholars and gentlemen. Across the Atlantic they bore the high ideals which they and their fathers had cherished in the old home.² "The first schools of divinity in New England provided courses of study in the originals of both Testaments, besides an introduction to Syriac; and a succession of competent teachers of Hebrew

¹ T. W. Higginson, "Atlantic Essays," p. 224.

² G. A. Smith, "Modern Criticism," etc.

appeared down to the middle of the seventeenth century." John Cotton, so long the religious leader in Massachusetts, had been dean of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, before leaving his old home. It is computed that for the first sixty years of New England history there were over her churches "as many graduates of Cambridge and Oxford as could be found in any population of similar size in the mother country. At one time, the first part of that period, there was in Massachusetts and Connecticut a Cambridge graduate for every two hundred and fifty inhabitants, besides sons of Oxford not a few."¹ "Nothing is cheap in New England," Cotton used to say, "but milk and ministers." The tone of the colony was religious. The Sabbath was rigidly kept and jealously fenced about. After sundown on Saturday no work was done.² By beat of drum or ringing of bells, or blowing of horn the people were summoned to the preparatory lecture. When Sunday dawned the meeting-house became for the time the center of life. But it was a restful center. The worshipers approaching it were bound on fear of fine, to ride slowly. At times, indeed, there would be a dread of disturbance from Indians. The people would come armed; a sentry kept guard at the church door; the minister himself carried a Bible under one arm and a musket under the other. As he passed up the aisle the congregation would rise, and in the same manner would they stand as he left the pulpit and wended his way home. Without any superstitious reverence for the building or the

¹ Tyler, "History of American Literature," Vol. I., Chap. 5.

² Cf. Earl, "The Sabbath in Puritan New England."

service, the building and the service held the hearers in restraint. "People," it was remarked, "do not sneeze or cough here in public assemblies so much as in England."¹ The sermon would often be long, but not even the boys were suffered to sleep. The autocracy of religion took visible form in the meeting-house. Within sight of the sanctuary you would see the stocks, the pillory, and the wooden cage for violent offenders against the peace. On a stool in the principal aisle would be seated the humiliated man or woman under discipline.

Throughout the early history of New England the influence of the sermon was great. It held nothing, whether sacred or secular, as above or beneath its notice. The approaching election was as much a fitting subject of discourse as was the choice of a new pastor. John Eliot inveighed against prolix locks; John Cotton against veils—and in the afternoon the fair Puritan maidens appeared with bare faces in appreciation of the sermon; Increase Mather, equally well informed in natural history and unfulfilled prophecy, declared that periwigs, "such as some of our members indulge in, make them resemble the locusts that came out of the bottomless pit";² Hugh Peters in many a sermon urged the formation of a stock company for fishing. In Connecticut it was ordered by law "that each minister should give sound and orthodox advice to his congregation at the time of civil elections." Fast days and special occasions were opportunities for patriotic addresses from the minister. James I., and after him his son Charles, had limited

¹ T. W. Higginson, p. 195.

² Earl, p. 317.

the pulpit in England. They had even forbidden the discussion of any religious opinion which would seem to imply departure from "the literal and grammatical sense of the Articles of the Established Church."¹ Once settled in his New England parish the preacher bade safe defiance to the galling restrictions of the Stuarts, and with refreshing plainness of speech dealt with passing events, with the fashions of the hour, with the eclipse in the sky or the wreck on the shore, as well as with the heresies of the Baptist and the Quaker. Clerical authority never again was so high in this country as it was in the first century of colonial history. In Virginia it was ordained by the civil powers, that no man, "disparage a minister whereby the minds of his parishioners may be alienated from him."² As a rule this authority was exercised wisely. Often it was the molding power in reforms and the chief guide in momentous crises. At other times it was petty and tyrannical. Nothing can be said in excuse for the eccentric Maine minister who prayed for a young lady in the congregation, and ended his invocation thus, "She asked me not to pray for her in public, but I told her I would, and so I have, Amen."³

I. John Cotton (1585-1652). With the names of some of the early New England preachers we should be familiar. Most distinguished of them was John Cotton who for more than twenty years was rector of the magnificent parish church of St. Botolph's, Boston, one of the largest churches in England, with a lantern

¹ Walker, p. 17.

² Cobb, "Rise of Religious Liberty in America," p. 81.

³ Earl, p. 316.

visible far out at sea. This he left to preach in the first rude meeting-house in the other Boston, across the Atlantic, which was destined before long to outstrip its ancient namesake on the Lincolnshire coast.

II. Thomas Hooker (1586-1647). From another English parish, although by way of Holland, came Thomas Hooker, the first minister of the church at Hartford, Conn., of whom, before he emigrated, it was said, "He was a person who while doing his Master's work would put a king in his pocket."¹ His influence in his new home was unbounded. "Whatever he delivered in the pulpit was soon put into an Order of Court, if of a civil, or set up as a practice in the church, if an ecclesiastical concernment."² His sermon would give the keynote for any political action in the colony; and this was also true, although not to the same extent, of the ministry at large. "New England," as Cotton Mather asserted, "being a country whose interests are remarkably enwrapped in theological circumstances, ministers ought to interest themselves in politics."

III. John Davenport (1597-1670). A company of wealthy London merchants who arrived in Boston in 1637 brought with them as their pastor John Davenport. He became the minister of the New Haven colony. Eloquent as a preacher and fearless as a man, he not only harbored in his own house the regicide judges, Whalley and Goffe, but on the Sabbath before their arrival preached a very bold sermon, openly advising his people to aid and comfort them as far as possible."³

¹ Cf. "Life," by G. L. Walker.

² *Ibid.*, p. 90.

³ Fiske, "The Beginnings of New England," p. 246.

IV. John Eliot (*1604-1690*). A Cambridge man, distinguished in the university for a skill in languages which he was afterward to put to such good account in translating the Bible into the dialect of the Algonquin Indians, was John Eliot, who abandoned a life of scholarship to win the savages to Christ, and with rare persuasiveness as well as tireless devotion, through travels and perils, hunger and thirst, persecution and misrepresentation, won for himself the title of the “Apostle to the Indians.” His motto might have found words in the noble utterance of Roger Williams, “To mind not our own but every man the things of another —yea, and to suffer wrong and to part with what we judge to be right, yea, our own lives, for the name of God, for the Son of God’s sake—this is humanity, this is Christianity.”

V. Roger Williams (*c. 1607-1683*). Roger Williams passed his life largely in the chill shades of opposition. Learned and quick-witted he no doubt was, but he was also pugnacious and overfond of controversy. And yet it is also true to say of him that “there has perhaps never lived a more gentle and kindly soul.”¹ The friend and associate of Cromwell and Milton, his views on religious liberty were far in advance of his age; he was careless of consequences in holding by his convictions; and to-day Rhode Island is the monument to his intrepid loyalty to conscience.

VI. Increase Mather (*1639-1723*). On the border line of a new era, more settled, more prosperous, less distinctly religious, certainly less under the control of clerical authority, came the Mathers, Increase and

¹ John Fiske.

Cotton, father and son. Increase Mather was a pastor in Boston, and president of Harvard College. Already in his time conversions were becoming rare, as he lamented in 1678; and twenty-two years later, he thought that before long it would be needful to gather churches out of churches, so general was the growth of worldliness.

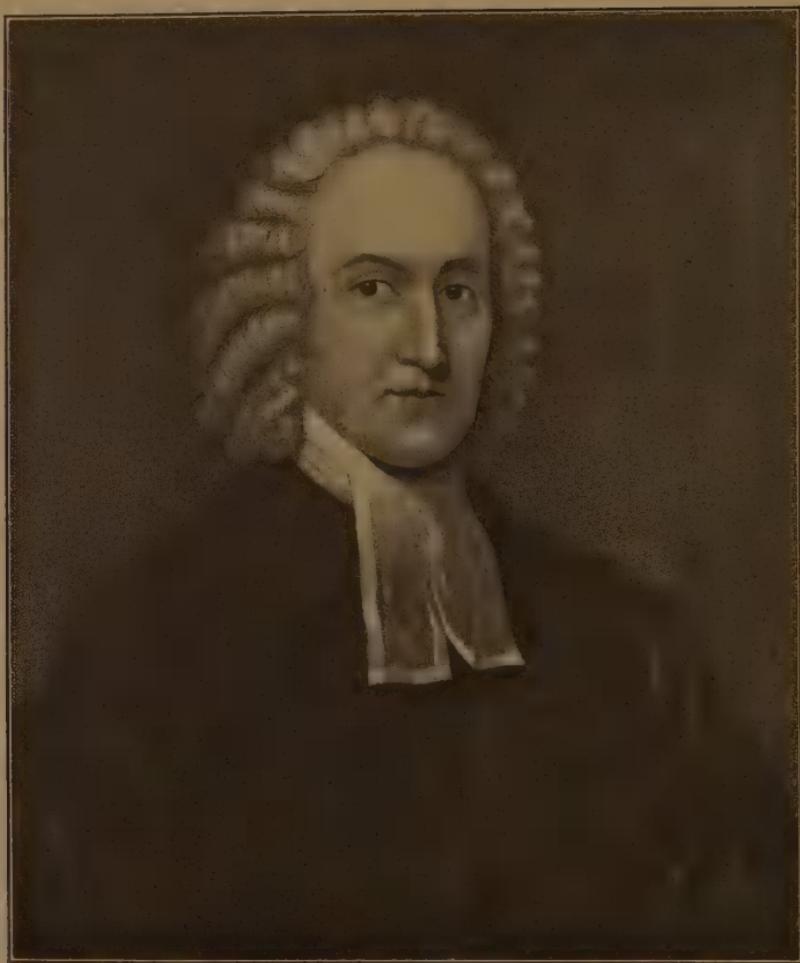
VII. Cotton Mather (1663-1728). His son, Cotton, beheld with grief the failure of the New England theocracy in which Church and State were to be alike under the control of the divine law. "The Lord gave him to see that in this world a Church State was impossible whereinto there enters nothing which defiles." It interests us to remember that these men were incessant and often very effective preachers. In the pulpit they discussed doctrine, exposed and with infinite pains pursued error, and dealt freely with political questions. There were no newspapers. There were few books. The pulpit was the common source alike of information and of opinion. "Princely preachers," Cotton Mather calls his predecessors. For six years his father preached in England, and then for sixty-two years in Boston, where he exerted a commanding influence in affairs of Church and State. And as Cotton Mather tells us, his grandfather, John Cotton, was tireless in the pulpit. Not content with preaching on Sunday, and giving a weekly lecture, he preached twice a week besides, on Wednesday and Thursday early in the morning. He also held a daily lecture in his house, which was at last abandoned as being too much thronged, and to add to all these, he would on occasional days spend six hours "in the word and in prayer."

Commonly, when crossing the Atlantic on his way out, he and two other ministers who were his companions, had three sermons a day—one after each meal.¹

The powerful era of American preaching began with Jonathan Edwards. For a hundred years before him there had been a decline in the religious life of New England.² This was mainly due to the low standard of church-membership and to the practice of admitting to the communion table all who professed the faith of the congregation, without inquiring into their spirit or life. There were other causes, such as the Indian wars, the uncertainties of frontier settlements, the prevalence of disease, and the bitterness of sectarian differences, breaking out "not in the arena of moral debate only, but in the legislature, the courtroom, and the jail." To us the picture of religious degeneracy remains to-day in Jonathan Edwards' impressive discourse, "An humble attempt to promote explicit agreement and visible union of God's people in extraordinary prayer for the revival of religion and the advancement of Christ's kingdom on earth." The church records of the time bear witness to the laxity of morals in the churches; but they also abound in records of strenuous effort to arrest the evils which they reveal. There had indeed been revivals of religion not infrequently, and with the opening of the eighteenth century these increased. Under Jonathan Edwards' predecessor at Northampton, the Rev. Solomon Stoddard, "the bigger part of the young people in the town seemed to be

¹ Higginson, p. 199.

² Cf. Brown, "The Pilgrim Fathers," and Walker, "Some Aspects," etc., Chap. 1, 2.



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mainly concerned for their eternal salvation." This was in 1712, and again in 1718. These revivals multiplied in the New England towns in the years 1734, 1735, and 1736.

VIII. Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758). Under such signs of promise Edwards was ordained and settled in Northampton, Mass., in 1727. 1. The son of a minister himself eminent for learning, Edwards entered Yale College at thirteen and at nineteen was licensed to preach. Almost from the day of his settlement he attracted attention by his sermons. They were written with much pains and then read. With the manuscript held close to his eyes, gesture was almost impossible. The preacher's voice was not attractive, and he had no graces of manner which could commend him to his hearers. His style was rugged rather than careless, but it never failed to express his thought in clear and telling language. Argumentative he was, but not for the sake of argument; logical, but only under the resistless impulse of the highest reason; doctrinal, and yet not so much for the sake of the doctrine as for the sake of its application. His intellect was not cold although it might be calm, it was on fire with intense conviction.

2. The effect produced by this remarkable oratory was almost without a parallel in the history of the pulpit. One of his hearers declared that when Edwards preached on "The Last Judgment" he looked for the heavens to open and for the Judge to descend and for the immediate separation of the righteous and the wicked. So powerfully was his audience moved by his sermon on "Their feet shall slide in due time," that men grasped the railings of the pews as if about to

sink into perdition. "There was such a breathing of distress and weeping," to quote one who was present, "that the preacher was obliged to speak to the people and desire silence that he might be heard." We shall scarcely wonder at this if we listen to his words:

The bow of God's wrath is bent, and the arrow made ready on the string, and justice bends the arrow at your heart, and strains the bow ; and it is nothing but the mere pleasure of God—and that of an angry God, without any promise or obligation at all—that keeps the arrow one moment from being made drunk with your blood. Thus all you that never passed under a great change of heart by the mighty power of the Spirit of God upon your souls ; all of you that were never born again, and made new creatures, and raised from being dead in sin to a state of new and before altogether unexperienced light and life, are in the hands of an angry God. However you may have had religious affections, and may keep up a form of religion in your families and closets and in the house of God, it is nothing but his mere pleasure that keeps you from being this moment swallowed up in everlasting destruction.

The God that holds you over the pit of hell—much as one holds a spider or some loathsome insect over the fire—abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked. His wrath toward you burns like fire ; he looks upon you as being worthy of nothing else but to be cast into the fire. He is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight ; you are ten thousand times more abominable in his eyes than the most hateful venomous serpent is in ours. You have offended him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince ; and yet it is nothing but his hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment. It is to be ascribed to nothing else that you did not go to hell the last night, that you was suffered to awake again in this world after you closed your eyes to sleep. And there is no other reason to be given why you have not dropped into hell since you arose in the morning, but that God's hand has held you up. There is no other reason to be given why you have not gone to hell since you have sat here in

the house of God, provoking his pure eyes by your sinful, wicked manner of attending his solemn worship. Yea, there is nothing else that is to be given as a reason why you do not at this very moment drop down into hell.

Can we wonder that a brother minister sitting behind him in the pulpit appalled at his language grasped the coat of the preacher, and cried, "Mr. Edwards! Mr. Edwards! Is not God merciful?"

Even now these sermons, which probably do injustice to Edwards in that they represent with immense force one side only of his preaching, affect us. But who can estimate aright the feeling which they produced when the preacher stood calm in his pulpit, while the distressed and convicted multitude wept around him, his very self-repression significant of a reserve power, his wasted form and thin voice suggestive of a being coming from the gates of death, and his eye, when it was lifted, so piercing that it was profanely said that on one occasion it "looked off" the bell rope in the steeple, so that the bell fell with a crash into the church?

3. The testimonies to his genius are practically unanimous. To Robert Hall he was "the greatest of the sons of men." Frederick W. Robertson said that his writings had "passed like the iron atoms of the blood into his mental constitution." Mrs. Stowe with reason thinks him "a poet in the intensity of his conceptions, and some of his sermons more terrible than Dante's 'Inferno.'" With equal justice Dr. Alexander Whyte, referring to one critic who claims "sweetness" as the favorite and most frequently recurring word in Edwards' writings, and to a second who thinks that

“light” is rather his characteristic expression, himself inclines to “beauty.” This is Whittier’s thought also:

Had he not seen in the solitudes
Of his deep and dark Northampton woods,
A vision of love about him fall ?
Not the blinding splendor that fell on Saul,
But the tenderer glory that rests on them
Who walk in the New Jerusalem ;
Where never the sun nor the moon are known,
But the Lord and his love are the light alone !

Undoubtedly “his saintliness of character exerted an influence no less powerful and lasting than that of his intellectual power. His greatest influence on men was by reason of this marvelous religious personality. Permeated by the thought of God and his constant presence, in pure holiness was his supreme delight.”¹

“Take him all in all,” says Dr. A. M. Fairbairn, “in the beauty of his character, in the elevation of his thought, his claim to stand amid the great thinkers of the world is indisputable.” Even more to our present purpose is the conclusion of Edwards’ latest biographer.² “He was the greatest preacher of his age. It is only at rare intervals that a man endowed with such a power appears.” The elements of greatness in Edwards as a preacher were in himself; in the extraordinary combination of gravity of character, profound spiritual insight, intense realism consequent on a vivid imagination, a philosophical grasp of his subject, logical clearness, a rare combination of masterful will and great tenderness, burning devotion, singleness of purpose and the

¹ Weldon, “Social and Economic History of New England,” Vol. II., pp. 700-706.

² Allen’s “Jonathan Edwards,” p. 126.

complete union of will, intellect, and feeling in the one supreme effort to glorify God and save souls.

IX. Samuel Hopkins (*1721-1803*). The influence of Edwards on the preaching of his generation and of that which followed was very great. Samuel Hopkins, the hero of Mrs. Stowe's story "The Minister's Wooing," gave his name to a system of theology which for many years molded the thought of numbers of New England preachers.

X. Nathaniel Emmons (*1745-1841*). For fifty-four years Nathaniel Emmons held one pastorate, and at the same time directed the theological studies of nearly a hundred students for the ministry. Less rigid in his doctrine than Edwards, he was distinguished by sharpness of mind, a keen faculty for analysis, frankness, and honesty of spirit, and deep reverence for the truth. His sermons have the fault of being too exclusively topical, a homiletic habit for which indeed Edwards set the model. This is apt to rob the discourse of that element of authority which rings from the preacher's lips when he holds fast to the very word of God. It is well to recall some of Emmons' maxims: "Preach better sermons every Sunday." "The thing, the thing, is what you are after." "When you write a sermon say, First, 'What do I know about this that my people do not know?' Second, 'How can I make my people know what I know?'"

But apart from the school of preachers which copied Edwards more or less closely, the influence of his quickening ministry, and especially of the Great Awakening of 1740, was very great. Religious thought became more systematic. Religious life was lifted to

a loftier plane. Perhaps the ideal of what preaching should be was most powerfully affected by Whitefield, who swept through the country in 1740 and was repeatedly heard in New England until his death in 1770. His free and fearless oratory displaced the manuscript in many instances, but more than this, his insistence on the need for conversion, his appeals to the emotions, his demand for instant surrender, widened, and on the whole for the better, the range of the sermons. By him first, and then by many of the early Methodist preachers, doctrine was presented not in a cold and unemotional manner, but as spirit and life. "The pulpits of the country were revived, and more lastingly than the pews."¹

In following the history of preaching we must have noticed how sensitive the pulpit has always been to the age to which it has spoken. Chrysostom's sermons could only have been preached in Constantinople, Latimer's only in London. The sermon reflects the times. The close of the eighteenth century in America was a time of great political excitement. The separation of the Colonies and the French Revolution occupied the thought and called forth the energies of the people. The preaching of the period suffered. "The stream of religious life," it has been said, "ran underground until the end of the century."² There was a transient fashion for liberty which was often a very different thing from the permanent passion for it. "That was the day," said Lyman Beecher, recalling his early experiences at Yale College, which he entered in 1793, "of the infidelity of the Tom Paine school. Boys that dressed flax in the barn, as I used to, read Tom Paine

¹ Walker, p. 103.

² Joseph Cook.

and believed him ; I read and fought him all the way. Most of the class before me were infidels, and called each other Voltaire, Rousseau, d'Alembert, etc." ¹ The pulpits were orthodox, but formal and moribund. Congregationalism was practically the endowed religion of New England ; and it indulged in the assumptions and imposed the exactions of a State Church. It had done noble work in the past, but its assumptions and its exactions were both of them relics of an earlier age. The time was ripe for a new movement, and this came with the Unitarians.

I. W. E. Channing (*1780-1842*). William Ellery Channing was born at Newport, R. I. His grandfather on his mother's side was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. His father was an ardent advocate of freedom. Samuel Hopkins, the theologian, was twice minister of a church at Newport, threw himself into the work of freeing all the slaves at Rhode Island, and by his independence as a thinker, and his activity as a philanthropist exercised a powerful influence on young Channing. In 1803 he was ordained and began to preach in Boston. He naturally felt the liberal tendencies which were in the air at this time, and before long he began to direct them. In 1819 he preached a sermon which defined his views and the position of American Unitarianism of that time. But he had no love for controversy, and lived long enough to see himself counted as a conservative in religious thought. The protest of Unitarianism in his time was mainly a plea for a present day religion. To perfect the life that now

¹ "Autobiography of Lyman Beecher," Vol. I., p. 30.

is was his aspiration. Channing was the soul of scrupulous honor.¹ He protested against giving money for even the most benevolent purposes when the donor owed and did not pay debts. Under his preaching, and that of men like-minded, there grew up a high standard of social and commercial morality, so that the integrity of a Boston merchant became proverbial. His word, it was currently said, was as good as his bond. So there set in a reaction against the doctrinal preaching which was formal and lifeless, against the spasmodic revivalism which was shallow and delusive, against the insistence on forms of statement which had in them no sympathy with humanity in its strength, and against all insincerity in religion. Against the marked distinction between clergy and laity Channing also protested. "On no one set of men was more obligation than on another to obey the precepts of religion and worship God."² "I do not ask you, my friends," he said to his congregation, "to leave your daily business for religion, but to take religion with you to the field, the counting-room, the office, and your homes." His reverence for the character of Christ was intense. At the meetings of his Association he irritated his brethren by aiming to turn conversation upon these great subjects which would have befitted the case were Jesus himself present to lead the conversation. To Coleridge he believes that he owed more than to any other philosophic thinker; and Coleridge, in his turn, said happily that Channing had "the love of wisdom and the wisdom of love."³ Those that saw him in the pulpit "saw a small man, with

¹ "Reminiscences of Doctor Channing," by A. P. Peabody, p. 156.

² *Ibid.*, p. 201.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

a rapid, nervous motion, with large, remarkable eyes with the appearance of seeing something," and a "deeply devout manner." His style was exceedingly beautiful, with more of literary grace in it than of rhetorical fervor; but what impressed his hearers was the sublime moral tone of his discourse. Defective on their doctrinal side, his sermons rose above the level of his time in their ethical emphasis.

II. Theodore Parker (1810-1860). Channing's criticism on Theodore Parker, who later wielded an immense power in Boston, could never have been passed on himself: "He deals too much in exaggerations. He makes truth unnecessarily repulsive." Here he was criticising Parker's sermon on "The Transient and Permanent in Christianity"; but indeed, his nature was the reverse of Parker's; the one was conciliatory, the other combative. It is remarkable that the two men, who are usually placed in the front rank as Unitarians, can scarcely with any justice to themselves be classed as Unitarians at all. Parker, in his extreme radicalism, broke away from that body, and preached to an independent society in the Boston Music Hall until ill health drove him abroad, and ultimately laid him in his grave in Florence. Channing was always ready to act with his coreligionists in their "asserting the right of free thought and a free expression of it,"¹ but he himself defined his position when he said: "I wish to regard myself as belonging not to a sect, but to the community of free minds, of lovers of the truth, and followers of Christ both on earth and in heaven."

¹ Peabody, p. 156.

We find that among contemporary Congregationalists there were great names.

I. Timothy Dwight (1752-1817). In 1795 Timothy Dwight became president of Yale College. Already, in his country parish of Greenfield Hill, he had become known as a strong preacher, and strangers were drawn to the village to hear him. In the quickening which came with the early years of the nineteenth century Doctor Dwight held a foremost place. He had, as the Unitarians had not, a firm faith in the evangelical doctrines.¹ He had also, as many of the leaders in the school of Jonathan Edwards of his day had not, a clear conviction that the minister should advise and exhort the unsaved to use the means of grace. It was his preaching more than any other one thing which put fresh life into the pulpit and added to the orthodox creed that accent of conviction without which it is impotent. Lyman Beecher, who while at college was converted under him, says:² "Most of the class before me were infidels. They thought the faculty were afraid of free discussion; but when they handed Doctor Dwight a list of subjects for class disputation, to their surprise he selected this: 'Is the Bible the Word of God?' and told them to do their best. He heard all they had to say, answered them, and there was an end. He preached incessantly for six months on the subject, and all infidelity skulked and hid its head." Those sermons remain in his "Theology," and they are still models of doctrinal discourse. Looking back over a long life, Lyman Beecher sees Timothy Dwight in the golden light of a grateful memory: "He was of noble form,

¹ Walker, p. 150.

² Autobiography, Vol. I., Chap. 7, 8.

with a noble head and body, and had one of the sweetest smiles that ever you saw. When I heard him preach [he is recalling the period of his conversion] on 'the harvest is passed, the summer is ended, and we are not saved,' a whole avalanche rolled down on my mind. I went home weeping every step."

Years after this when Lyman Beecher told his old president how much he owed him, Doctor Dwight answered,¹ "Then I have done a great and soul-satisfying work. I consider myself amply rewarded." To him, certainly, the awakening of a new and vigorous era of pulpit power in New England was immensely indebted.

II. Lyman Beecher (1775-1863). Lyman Beecher, the father of a famous family, was in every way worthy to be its sire. He was still a young man and in his first parish, East Hampton, Long Island, when Alexander Hamilton fell in a duel with Aaron Burr. Beecher preached a sermon on duelling which attracted general attention, roused public indignation and gave it a voice, and did much to put an end to the evil. It was one of the epoch-making sermons of the world. Stronger words he himself never uttered :

But why so vehement against duelling in particular? Because at present it is a great and alarming national sin; because no other crime with such shameless effrontery bids defiance to the laws of God and man; because no other crime is so palliated, justified, and with such impunity sanctioned by the example of the great; and, of course, no other crime has so alarming an aspect upon the principles of our young men and the moral sensibilities of our country. I may add, that no other description of criminals, if they escape with impunity, may publish their crimes, glory in their shame, and still be rewarded with the confidence and honors

¹ Tyler, "Three Men of Letters," p. 110.

of their country. The crisis is an awful one ; and this apathy to a crime of the deepest dye is a prelude to approaching death.

Against drunkenness he was among the first preachers of the country to utter a protest. "The tide was swelling," he says, referring to what he himself saw in the drinking habits of society, "my alarm and shame and indignation were intense." The movement for reform which he successfully inaugurated found in him its most impassioned advocate :

Oh ! were the sky over our heads one great whispering-gallery, bringing down about us all the lamentation and woe which intemperance creates, and the firm earth one sonorous medium of sound, bringing up around us from beneath the wailings of the damned, whom the commerce in ardent spirit had sent thither—these tremendous realities assailing our senses would invigorate our conscience and give decision to our purpose of reformation.

When he settled in Boston in 1826 it was with the resolve to drive Unitarianism into the sea. The spirit of the old Puritans was in his soul, and when after a visit to their burial-ground he would enter his church for the week-evening lecture, "there was that in the prayer and in the sermon that seemed like the rolling in of the Atlantic upon the beach."¹ "His whole theology was curative. Convinced himself that the doctrines of religion were reasonable, he felt unbounded confidence in his ability to make them appear so to others." He never preached without an eye on his audience, noticing every change of countenance, every indication of awakened interest. Gifted with the orator's ardent temperament, "the same impetuosity that made him when a boy spring into the water after the first fish that

¹ Autobiography, Vol. I., p. 52.

dropped from his hook, characterized all his attempts as a fisher of men." Endowed with great emotion and sympathy, with a manner informal and natural, a strain of shrewd practical sense, a good deal of mother wit, and an assurance that the truth he preached was that which his hearers needed, Lyman Beecher was one of the most effective of pulpit orators. "A thunderbolt," according to his contemporary, Dr. John Todd,⁵ "you never knew where it would strike, but you never saw him rise to speak without feeling that so much electricity must strike." "That man," whispered one of his hearers as he listened to him, "has done a great deal of magnetizing in his day." Many of his pithy sayings are worthy of being remembered, but we recall most readily the one sentence in which the old pulpit warrior, the hero of a hundred close-fought battles, the leader in as many memorable revivals, sums up his whole experience: "Doctor Beecher," he was asked, "you know a great deal; tell us what is the greatest of all things." "It is not theology; it is not controversy; but it is to save souls."

⁵ "Life of John Todd," p. 81.

XV

AMERICAN PREACHING (CONTINUED)

I. C. G. Finney (1792-1875). The revivals with which the active life of Lyman Beecher was closely connected were remarkable for the effective preaching of Asahel Nettleton, and then of Charles G. Finney, E. N. Kirk, and Jacob Knapp. Of these the most powerful was Finney. His autobiography is a study in religious anatomy that needs to be read carefully. Converted in a lawyer's office, and with so little of human instrumentality that it gave a superhuman aim to his whole religious life, Finney believed intensely in the imperative need of the baptism of the Holy Spirit for the preacher. In his sermons, which really contained a system of theology, he emphasized the responsibility of the human will, self-determining in its action, to the limit of personal ability. His discourses are chains of irresistible reasoning, coils in which the hearer is folded, and from which, when once the first premise is granted, there seems no logical escape. He was the lawyer in the pulpit, yet with very much of the orator's passion. On lawyers and professional men accustomed to exact thought, his influence was probably without any parallel in the history of preaching. Recalling Finney in the fullness of his powers, one of his hearers thus describes him :

A tall, grave-looking man, dressed in an unclerical suit of gray, ascended the pulpit. Light hair covered his tall forehead ; his

eyes were of a sparkling blue, and his every movement dignified and graceful. I listened. It did not sound like preaching, but like a lawyer arguing a case before a court and jury. This was not singular, perhaps, for the speaker had been a lawyer before he became a clergyman. The discourse was a chain of the closest logic, brightened by felicity of illustration and enforced by urgent appeals from a voice of rare compass and melody.¹

The first half of the nineteenth century was marked by constant revivals of religion. Finney represented the sanest and most intelligent type of evangelists. Often, without doubt, there were crudities of method and extravagancies of statement, on the part of these preachers, but they were not essential to the preaching itself. In newly settled tracts of the country the evangelist was often a genuine son of the soil, and admirably suited to the people he addressed. "Far beyond the Alleghanies, in Tennessee, in Kentucky, on the frontier, revivals occurred, and they swept along the frontier where man lived in the solitude of the woods and thought more of the sky and of the God above it than do men in the dust of the city street."²

II. Horace Bushnell (1802-1876). But sensitive as ever to time and place, preaching in other parts of the land reflected other conditions of thought and life. Horace Bushnell illustrated this. He was a mediator between the old school of theology and the newer views. As a student at Yale college he had battled his own way single-handed from doubt to faith, but his mind was always the mind of the skeptic in the true sense of that word. He must prove before holding fast. "I have been greatly blessed," he himself said,

¹ Henry B. Stanton.

² Joseph Cook.

"in my doubtings." Whatever he might be in his books, in the pulpit he was not so much a controversialist as a seer. His active ministry was spent in a Congregational church in Hartford, Connecticut. There he exercised an influence on the whole city, often molding its civic progress, always influencing its intellectual life, himself all the while a student, a thinker, and one who in the secret recesses of his own soul "fed on God." Perhaps no other quality so much distinguished him in his preaching as virility. He had both imagination and common sense, he was at the same time saintly and shrewd, he had splendid insight and worldly foresight, but all he said was quick with vigorous life. A thinker first, he was when the spirit burned a preacher. Language with him was the reflection of his thought rather than its "exact representation."¹ He strove to translate the language of the pulpit into the vernacular, and to restore to the accepted theology reality. Such terms as "faith" and "sacrifice" and "propitiation" and "atonement" must be made to carry a living meaning to his hearers. In their phraseology his sermons often suggested the age of homespun which he loved, while in thought they were full of spiritual power. There is perhaps no better example of his preaching than the sermon entitled "Unconscious Influence," from the text "Then went in also that other disciple."

III. Henry Ward Beecher (1813-1887). Beginning his public life as a Congregational minister in Indiana, Henry Ward Beecher was called in 1847 to the newly organized Plymouth Church in Brooklyn, N. Y. At once he took rank as a great pulpit orator, and from

¹ "Prophets of the Christian Faith," p. 181.



HENRY WARD BEECHER

that time to his death, as preacher, lecturer, writer, editor, agitator, reformer, he was constantly in the eye of the public. 1. As a speaker he had in voice and manner and spirit every qualification for a great popular orator. As soon as he took the platform, it has been truly said, Beecher took his audience. He was no such theologian as was his father, Lyman Beecher, but he was able to reason and to reason well. He had more of the logical faculty than falls to the lot of the ordinary popular preacher. 2. Intuitive rather than dogmatic or argumentative, he was so far at the mercy of his audience that what he gave to them he first got from them; he received the vapor and returned the flood. He was full of the sympathy which springs from fellowship. Manhood was what Christ had in perfection, so he taught, and it is what we must recover. "Man is ever striving to regain his true nature, and sorrow is the true conflict in men's way to themselves." 3. Supremely dramatic, he lived in the lives of his fellows. "I do not think of it," he remarked of the human struggle in others, "but I see it." "Beecher," says Doctor Schaff, "was in profound sympathy with nature and with man, especially the common people." So he fought the battle of the slave, of the overworked, of the oppressed the land over; and in his own church his benefactions were constant. "When we get to the last pinch," said a lady in his congregation, "we can always help any one by getting at Mr. Beecher." 4. Coupled with this broad and responsive humanity was an imagination which was regal. The richest imagination since Shakespeare, was what Mr. Spurgeon credited him with. All the world was his servant, and came at

his call. The earth, the seasons, the garden, the forest, were his ministers. Illustrations never failed him when he turned to these sources.

When the rude ox or fierce wind has broken off the shrub and laid it down on the ground lacerated and torn, it lies there, but it is only a few hours before the forces of nature in the stem and in the root begin to grow; and some new buds shoot out, and before the summer shall have gone round the restorative effort of nature will bring out on that shrub other branches. And shall the heart of man be crushed, and God send sweet influences of comfort from above to inspirit it, and that heart not be able to rise above its desolateness?

His poetic nature was in full accord with the various moods of the natural world. A friend found Beecher one bleak wintry day in the front of the Brooklyn ferry boat, standing well forward in the storm. He says: "I stood for a moment near him, hesitating to speak, but presently seeing through the driving snow a sea-gull piercing its way against the wind, I touched him and said pointing upward, 'See that.' 'Yes,' he said solemnly, 'he is mine.' 'Yours?' I said inquiringly. 'Yes, I'm joint-heir,' and the color deepened upon his face and his eyes moistened as he followed the bird in its brave flight."

To art, painting and music and poetry, he readily responded. A fine picture would sometimes melt him into tears, a strain from Beethoven or Mendelssohn makes his heart vibrate with responsive chords. 5. At the same time, while his sermons are rich in the strokes of the true artist, they are equally remarkable for such homely touches as appeal "to men's business and bosoms." "If you choose to take a pole and stir up

men from the bottom, you will find plenty of mud," made each hearer look into his own heart ; and before the familiar thrust at the people who "prayed cream and lived skim milk," many a devout soul stood condemned. Indeed his practical common sense was one source of his pulpit power. Caring little for truth in the abstract, he was intensely concerned with it when it was applied to the lives of those to whom he spoke.

6. How fearless he was his great speeches delivered in England during the Civil War prove, but equally so was he in addressing his own congregation. A stranger recalling a discourse which he heard from him not long before his death, writes :

"There are men," he said, looking around, and a kind of shudder went through the assembly, "there are men here who are tunneled, mined ; their time will come, not to-day or to-morrow, not for months or years perhaps, but it will come ; in a moment, from an unforeseen quarter, a trifling incident, their reputations will be blown to atoms, and what they have sown they will reap, just that. There is no dynamite like men's lusts and passions."

7. In his preaching, whatever the form his sermon took, Beecher held by his text. "No other preacher," says his assistant, "treats the Bible more reverently." In his later sermons, however, more than in his earlier he often used the text to express his own thought rather than made the thought express the text. The story of what he called his first sermon, preached at Lawrenceburg, Indiana, is too valuable to be omitted. In his Yale Lectures on Preaching he says :

I determined to sit down and study how the apostles did it ; for, though I was not an apostle, I thought possibly I could do

something, in some way, according to my size and shape. I took the book of Acts, and studied Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost. I analyzed it, I looked at it all the way through, I formed a theory of the way in which the effect was produced, and I then constructed a sermon, not of the same material, because Peter was preaching to a Jewish audience and I was preaching to Hoosiers, but I constructed a sermon on the same principle, as I understood it. I was preaching in the hall of a little academy that would hold a hundred or a hundred and fifty people. The legislature was in session, and a good many lawyers and public men were there. I went down, on Sunday morning, as anxious as a boy with a new gun would be to try and see how it would shoot. I fired my sermon, and there were about ten men awokened. If there was ever anybody delighted, I was. I had learned how to preach. I said to myself, "I have got the knack of aiming now; I know what to do." Well, the trouble was that, though I had preached that sermon of that sort, I had material to preach but one or two more, and then I ran out. But I had got the ideal, after all, the sense of aiming at certain points, and carrying them by the direct application of the truth. That was everything to me.

8. The year before his death he was in England, and the portrait of him sketched by a journalist sets him before us fairly, not indeed in his prime, but after the triumphs and trials of a life of varied and sometimes tragical experiences :

Mr. Beecher is a hale old man, portly and of commanding presence. He has the orator's full lips, a massive jaw, a Luther-like expression of almost animal strength in all the lower part of the face, at once in contrast and in a sort of harmony with the high, intellectual forehead, and with the look of benignity in the eyes. The long white hair touches all this off with dignity and the bushy brows give strength to the countenance just where alone it is perhaps slightly needed. The mobility of feature is extreme, and the face by turn expresses a sort of dogged will, tenderness, exaltation of feeling, and, above all, humor, with equal ease.

The words which Bishop Phillips Brooks wrote on his death are true of Mr. Beecher at his best:¹ "He was the greatest preacher in America, and the greatest preacher means the greatest power in the land. To make a great preacher two things are necessary, the love of truth and the love of souls, and surely no man had greater love of truth or love of souls than Henry Ward Beecher."

The Baptists. Akin to the Congregationalists in their church polity, at first the Baptists seem to have been in advance of them in their fidelity to their principles. Roger Williams was their earliest preacher of mark, but he was not immersed until he had settled Providence and inaugurated the great experiment in perfect religious toleration which is still his noblest monument. The doctrine of religious liberty for which he stood, the Baptists had from the time of the Reformation been foremost in maintaining.² Their first experiences in the New World were of the roughest. To be fined, whipped, and banished from the colonies was their fate North and South. The Boston magistrates protested against the teachings of Obadiah Holmes, who had been educated at Oxford and then exercised his ministry in Massachusetts. "They looked upon Baptists as moral lepers unfit to associate with their fellow-men."³ For holding a religious service at a private house in Swampscott, Holmes and his friends were thrown into jail in 1651, and, not accepting deliverance, he was bound to a stake and

¹ "Life of Phillips Brooks," Vol. II., p. 645.

² Fiske, "The Beginnings of New England," Chap. 4.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

whipped. He bore his brutal punishment "with joyfulness in my heart and cheerfulness in my conscience," to use his own words, and to the magistrates when he was loosed from the post said heroically, "You have struck me as with roses." In America, as elsewhere, the authorities were slow in learning the lesson of religious toleration. The first Baptist church in Boston was erected almost surreptitiously in 1679, and, because the promoters of the enterprise would not promise to cease from their undertaking, the magistrates ordered the church doors to be nailed up. Preaching fared hardly for the Baptists when their ministers were whipped and their churches closed by the civil authorities. In the South their lot was scarcely better. There the colonists were in general professedly members of the Established Church of England. Their clergy too often reflected the low religious type of that church at home in the first half of the eighteenth century. Indeed, it was customary to send out to Virginia and Maryland "the poorest specimens of clergymen that the mother country afforded."¹ The Baptists as pioneers and revivalists found in these neglected fields their place of labor and frequently of suffering.² They were humble men, without learning, rude in manners and in speech, but incessant in labors for the spread of the gospel. Gradually they won their way to the hearts of the people and eventually to the respect of their persecutors. With better times came better training. John Leland (b. 1754) belonged to an age of homespun, but he was a natural orator, deeply read in the Bible, and for many

¹ Fiske, "Old Virginia," Vol. II., p. 305.

² Armitage, "History of the Baptists," Chap. 8.

years "probably the most popular preacher who resided in Virginia."¹ One of the early Baptist pioneers in the South, John Gano (b. 1727), ultimately became pastor of the First Baptist Church in New York. During the war of the Revolution he flung himself into the conflict and was continually under fire. He shared with others as brave as he the praise of General Washington, who declared that the "Baptist chaplains were the most prominent and useful in the army."

When the better day dawned and the young nation had time to breathe, the great missionary movements which were stirring the mother country roused the American churches to action, and "handicapped though they had been by adverse legislation and social disadvantages, the Baptists were found in the front ranks of workers in this newly awakened zeal for the extension of the gospel."²

I. Francis Wayland (1796-1865). Strangely enough, the first preacher among them to attain a national reputation was destined to do so as one of a little group of famous college presidents, among whom Francis Wayland stands second to none for his advanced and statesmanlike views of what the higher education of the country demanded.

Francis Wayland, the son of English parents, after studying in Union College and Andover Theological Seminary, was called from a college tutorship to the pastorate of the First Baptist Church, Boston. Ere long it fell to his lot to preach the annual sermon before the Baptist Foreign Missionary Society of that city.

¹ Armitage, p. 788.

² Walker, p. 154.

The evening came, rainy and cold.¹ The northeast wind of the New England coast seemed to chill the small audience. It chilled also the preacher, who wore his great coat through the service. Under these discouraging circumstances Francis Wayland announced as his theme, "The Moral Dignity of the Missionary Enterprise" (Matt. 13:38), and delivered a sermon which was directed against the apathy with which some and the ridicule with which others regarded missions. The sermon was published and produced a profound impression. Missions had found their champion on this side of the Atlantic. Before long the discourse was issued in England and translated into continental languages, and the enduring and solid worth of its argument may be inferred from the fact that half a century later Professor Max Müller, of Oxford University, in the nave of Westminster Abbey gave a lecture on missions which in tone is identical with that of Doctor Wayland's discourse.² Two other sermons of a patriotic character strengthened Doctor Wayland's position, and together with the first, gave utterance to his two master passions, love for the kingdom of God and zeal for humane effort.³ In 1826 he was chosen president of Brown University. To this institution he devoted the strength of his manhood and to the spread of the gospel among his fellow-citizens he consecrated the mellow experience of a beautiful old age. 1. His earlier sermons were more ambitious in their rhetoric and reflected the stately language of the pulpit of the period when Samuel Johnson was the model of style. 2. To the

¹ James O. Murray, "Life of Dr. Francis Wayland," p. 45.

² *Ibid.*, p. 50.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

students of his university he preached, at about the time when Thomas Arnold was addressing the boys in Rugby Chapel, discourses which are still fine specimens of this kind of address. 3. Later still he delivered various sermons which represent the severely simple thought and language of one who felt the urgency of the times and the transience of the opportunity. All his sermons are remarkable for their breadth of treatment, for their mental independence, for their use of various resources, and for their knowledge of the human heart. "No man," said one of his hearers, "ever ploughed through my conscience as Doctor Wayland did." His style excelled in its clearness. "He never wrote an obscure sentence in his life."¹ To this, in part, he was indebted for the hold which he kept on his hearers, but even more this was due to his masterly analysis of his subject, his Saxon speech, his concise reasoning, and the practical tone of his preaching. The effect produced by his discourse was enhanced by the singular majesty of his presence. The head, the brow, the deep-set eye, the massive frame, the awe in his voice, gave the needed frame to the sermon. When Francis Wayland was at his best we may well believe that "no one ever heard him without confessing the power of a great religious teacher."²

Faithful to the traditions of Rhode Island, Doctor Wayland was a strong advocate of human rights, and in 1844 engaged in a controversy with Dr. Richard Fuller, of Baltimore, on the system of domestic slavery in the South. The debate, which attracted general attention and did much to foster the anti-slavery sentiment in the North, was a model of Christian courtesy.

¹ Murray, p. 128.

² *Ibid.*, p. 253.

II. Richard Fuller (1804-1876). In Richard Fuller the president of Brown University met a foeman worthy of his steel. A graduate of Harvard, and a lawyer, with the promise of a distinguished career before him, he was converted during a powerful revival at Beaufort, S. C., and at once began to preach. In 1847 he became pastor of a Baptist¹ Church in Baltimore, and to the close of his life was identified with that city. As a preacher he had few peers. The face and figure of an orator, an imagination which saw in concrete form the subject of his discourse, a legal acuteness which fortified passion with reason, and an intense, overwhelming love for his Lord, gave him while he lived a foremost place among the great preachers of the country. His published sermons still preserve to us much of the power by which he swayed the hearts of his hearers, and they are full of Christ. He seems to have been influenced by Saurin, a better pattern than whom the preacher can hardly find.

III. John A. Broadus (1827-1895). The art of preaching is indebted to another Baptist, Dr. John A. Broadus, for one of the most useful and popular textbooks on the subject. Doctor Broadus was an alumnus of the University of Virginia,¹ and passed much of his active life as a teacher in the classrooms of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, of which he finally became the president. But throughout the land, and nowhere more than in the North and East, he was recognized as a prince in the pulpit. His manner was calm and deliberate, his style easy and conversational, and his language so crystal clear that at first it failed

¹ Cf. "Life," by A. T. Robertson.

to impress his hearers with its beauty. Before he had been speaking many minutes, however, one remarked the perfection of its simplicity, and recognized a master of the art which entirely concealed art. His devotion to the supreme end of preaching saved him from mistaking the channel for the stream, and when recalled afterward, alike the thought and the language of his sermons lingered in the mind like strains of melodious and inspiring music.

The Episcopalians. The Puritans when they left England to find homes in the New World left many friends who were members of the Established Church, but also men of broad and tolerant spirit.¹ The emigrants must have brought over with them in many instances the traditions of a church which had been distinguished for great preachers, and the news would reach them in their adopted country of the noble way in which during the seventeenth century the succession was being maintained in the mother country. The lot of the Episcopalian emigrant was in many respects a hard one. In New England he was in the minority. He had to pay his taxes in support of another church than his own, and for long years he was in so many words called "a dissenter." In the South, while over great ranges of territory he held the chief place in the ecclesiastical order, yet he had good reason to complain that the clergymen sent out to minister to the spiritual needs of the colonies were frequently ill-chosen. "Men unfit for any appointment at home were thought good enough for the colonies."² Equally had he reason

¹ Fiske, "Old Virginia," Vol. I., p. 276. ² *Ibid.*, Vol. II., p. 305.

to protest against the indifference of the authorities across the sea. When James Blair, the founder of William and Mary College, urged on the treasury commissioner, Sir Edward Seymour, that such an institution was needed for training up clergymen, saying, "You must not forget that people in Virginia have souls to save as well as people in England,"¹ "Souls!" cried Seymour with an oath, "grow tobacco!" Yet one may believe that the clergyman had his part in the better life of the South, as it was seen among the rural gentry of the Old Dominion, and where "manly simplicity, love of home and family, breezy activity, disinterested public spirit, thorough wholesomeness and integrity, were the features of the society whose consummate flower was George Washington."²

For a century past the Episcopalians have not lacked for pulpit orators in the South, and some of the finest types of practical preachers have been found of late years among the Western bishops, but it is to the East that we look for the man who in a brief but splendid ministry impressed himself on the country at large as having a right to stand among the peers of sacred eloquence.

Phillips Brooks (1836-1892). Phillips Brooks, who came of old Congregational stock, was born in Boston in 1836. His ministry was begun in Philadelphia, but it was carried forward and consummated in the city of his birth, where to-day Trinity Church remains as its fitting and characteristic memorial.

1. Although before beginning to preach he attempted to teach (with poor success), and during the last years of his life he was Bishop of Massachusetts,

¹ Fiske, Vol. II., p. 126.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. II., p. 312.



PHILLIPS BROOKS

yet it is as a preacher of extraordinary brilliance that he is remembered. A man of high stature and herculean strength, rejoicing in health and blessed with a contagious vitality, Phillips Brooks in his early ministry stood, to quote a contemporary criticism,¹

impassive, almost statuesque in imperturbable tranquillity, rattling off in a monotone, so swiftly as to tease and half baffle the most watchful ear, swallow flights of thought, feeling, poetry, philosophy, piety, biblical learning, sociological wisdom, trenchant criticism—in no syllogistic order or sequence, but plainly the legitimate fruition of his theme, held together by a blood-tie of spiritual kinship, striding, lilting along through the spaces and reaches of the inner world, until the great throngs in painful, half-breathed, eager silence seemed beside themselves with a preternatural ecstasy.

2. Although he usually read them, his sermons seemed almost the impromptu utterances of a preacher charged with his theme and eager to make his hearers share with him its truths. As a fact, no man prepared for the pulpit more carefully. During the early days of the week he carried his subject for the next Sunday in his mind,

taking it with him wherever he went, into all places and conversations, into his reading; little by little putting down on paper all the thoughts which occurred to him. On Wednesday he selected and arranged these ideas into brief paragraphs which formed the backbone of his sermon. One thousand words was the result of his study so far. Next he went over the paragraphs, each of which contained a distinct idea, and was to become, when expanded, a paragraph in the finished sermon, placing over against each the number of pages it would occupy when it had been amplified. Then he added the numbers together. Thirty pages was the limit of the finished sermon. On Thursday and Friday

¹ "The New York Tribune."

he wrote the sermon in large, flowing handwriting. On Sunday it thrilled an audience who marveled at his power.¹

3. His mission as a preacher seemed to be to render theology into life. Truth in the abstract had as little charm for him as it had for Beecher. He found his inspiration in contact with human life. A real preacher, he cared first for his hearer and then for the truth as it became vital in the hearer's soul.² There was progress in his ministry, and this reflected itself in his sermons. In Philadelphia he was more of the artist than afterward, he seemed, indeed, to be outside of his work rather than a part of it ; then on a higher plane he battled with the forces which undermined faith ; and finally, after the experiences of travel had ripened his thought and widened his vision, his whole soul went out in sympathy with our common humanity. Every hearer of his in Boston felt that at all events there was for him one true friend, and he the man in the pulpit.

4. His mind was not profound, and he often illustrated his subject without explaining it,³ "he showed great intellectual acuteness and much ingenuity of thought, his imagination played around his theme and made it luminous, especially when he was dealing with the natural rather than the supernatural, and the moral rather than the doctrinal ; but he often impressed us as being a discoverer penetrating the recesses of the heart and revealing to us its sorrows, its joys, its possibilities, its powers, rather than a prophet on whose lips burned

¹ A. V. G. Allen, "Life of Phillips Brooks," Vol. II., pp. 115, 761, *et seq.*

² *Ibid.*, Vol. II., p. 451.

³ "The Spectator" (London), October 4, 1884, p. 1319.

the message which drew its authority from the cry, 'Thus saith the Lord.' "

5. No preacher better than Phillips Brooks illustrates the very close connection that there is in the mind of the orator between what he has to say and the way in which he will say it. "He had great faith in the possibility of turning conviction and belief into axioms," and it is evident that "no sooner did he receive a thought than he occupied himself with the form it would take." From early study of the classics he passed to the great masters of English composition, Shakespeare and Jeremy Taylor and Coleridge, Shelley and Wordsworth, Ruskin, Carlyle, and Tennyson. But his composition was no mosaic of bits of splendor filched from other writers, it was essentially his own; and never was there a style which better fitted the speaker and his thought. His sermon style maintained a high level of beauty and lucidity; occasionally it rose into grandeur; for richness and aptness of illustration it was unsurpassed, and yet throughout it all one felt that the language was knit closely over the thought, and that it was with this that the speaker was supremely concerned. 6. For that reason the literature which most powerfully affected him was distinctly and in the highest significance of the term religious. Maurice, Stanley, and Bushnell spoke to him, but not more certainly than did Cromwell and his great secretary, John Milton, and among the writers of our own day, Browning and Tennyson. "What a difference it would have made to me had Tennyson not lived!" he once exclaimed.

Listening to him, there might come moments when with Principal Tulloch, of Scotland, we could say, "I

was electrified ; I could have got up and shouted," but so true was it that not the language but the thought of the preacher affected us that we never lost the conviction that "here was a man pre-eminently sane, rational, calm, self-controlled, with wise practical judgment," a man to be trusted as well as loved.

7. No notice of Phillips Brooks would be adequate which failed to do justice to his moral nature. While he was speaking, with no conscious effort of his own, it became a powerful influence in making his sermon effective. To this Dr. R. S. Storrs paid tribute when he said :

There was that unsurpassed affluence of nature and of culture, but with it there was the beautiful simplicity of spirit, as of the vital air, as of the sunshine which irradiates and bathes the earth —a simplicity as childlike as one ever saw in a human soul. There was his utter devotion to the highest ideals of duty and of truth, and his keenest apprehension of the beauty and authority of these ideals ; and yet there was with this the most sympathetic interest, habitual and spontaneous, in humble persons and in the common affairs of life, his own or theirs.

To the last he preserved the heart of a child, and clung to the sunny memories of the happy home in which, as one of a large family, he had been reared. "Many a man can say, I did the things my father told me ; but the man I am my mother made me." This was a confession, which he shared with many another man who has come to be famous ; how true it was in his case was shown when he was bidden to preach before Queen Victoria and some one asked him if he was afraid. "No," he replied with a smile, "I have preached before my mother."

His sermons, the last volume of which,¹ published

¹ "The Mystery of Iniquity and Other Sermons."

after his death, is perhaps the best, are likely to have a permanent place in our literature; and in the preacher's library should certainly be found his *Yale Lectures on Preaching*, which in their power to inspire enthusiasm for the noblest of all vocations have no superior.

For fifty years and more after the death of Whitefield the influence of the great evangelist's preaching remained,¹ especially in the South, as a power for good. In many places he had preached for several days in succession to thousands of people. His sermons were remembered vividly, and passages from them repeated by those whom they had won to a Christian life. This was especially the case among the Presbyterians, whose traditional faith harmonized with the Calvinism of Whitefield. How deep and lasting was the effect produced by Whitefield was seen when the Presbyterian Synod of Philadelphia was divided on the question of the essential qualification for the ministry, one part, known as the Old Side, holding off from Whitefield and revivals and emphasizing the necessity of scholastic training; the other, the New Side, affiliating rather with Whitefield and judging of ministers by their ability to preach rather than by their scholastic attainments. The Presbyterians, true to the best traditions of Scotland and of the north of Ireland, whence many of them came, were foremost in advocating education; and a high average of intelligence has always distinguished the Presbyterian ministry. To the love of hearing sermons, which has also been characteristic of the same race, we may attribute the eagerness with which

¹ "Life of Archibald Alexander," p. 117.

good preaching was sought in the South. Of necessity that preaching, however effective, was often crude enough. The Revolution had disturbed the settled order of things. The fashion of French thought had infected the younger generation with skepticism. The population in the newer parts of the country was scattered and sparse. Hungry as many were for religious services, those services were hard to get. Archibald Alexander doing missionary work in the destitute part of the Southern States, found multitudes of poor people living in the pine woods "who seldom heard a sermon except when some itinerant Methodist passed through the settlement." Here as elsewhere the Methodist circuit rider was a welcome visitor.

The Methodists. Thomas Coke (1747-1814), the first bishop of Methodism in the United States, was himself indefatigable in his labors. Originally as an Episcopal clergyman in England he had become deeply concerned first for his own spiritual welfare and then for the salvation of his parishioners. His ministry took on a new earnestness and power. A crowded church laid him under the imputation of Methodism, and the mob drove him from his parish, to cast in his lot with the despised followers of Wesley. Bells were rung and hogsheads of cider broached to celebrate his expulsion, which, however, gave to the world a man who was to rank second only to Wesley himself in the success of Methodism.¹ Small in person but gigantic in energy, Coke had the spirit of an apostle. When a veteran of almost seventy years, after crossing the

¹ Stevens, "History of Methodism," p. 512.

Atlantic eighteen times, he volunteered as a missionary to the East Indies, and died on the voyage. "I want," said he on his first voyage to America, "the wings of an eagle, and the voice of a trumpet, that I may proclaim the gospel through the east and the west, the north and the south."

The Presbyterians. The conditions of life in the South made it natural that the character of the preaching should be evangelistic. The Baptist, the Presbyterian, the Methodist, were active in promoting revivals.

I. Archibald Alexander (1772-1851). In this spirit Archibald Alexander was called into the ministry, and the man who was destined to be the first professor of theology in Princeton Theological Seminary, and the founder of a family distinguished for scholarship, served his apprenticeship as an itinerant evangelist. In his early sermons he gave wings to his imagination ; and even afterward, when his style became simpler and less ornate, he never failed to distinguish between the rhetoric of the pulpit and the rhetoric of the classroom.¹ A theologian, he never made the mistake of delivering a theological lecture to a popular audience.

II. John Mitchell Mason (1770-1829). The most famous Presbyterian preacher of this period was John Mitchell Mason, who still ranks among the greatest pulpit orators of the country. His ministry was chiefly exercised in New York, but his fame was world-wide. To listen to his famous sermon, "Messiah's Throne,"² Robert Hall traveled to London, and when he had heard it, declared that he would never dare enter the pulpit again.

¹ "Life," pp. 372, 541, 544.

² Heb. 1 : 8.

The resolve was happily dispelled when a day or two later, on his return home, a simple and inexperienced country minister preached in his presence. After hearing him Robert Hall said that he took heart to mount the pulpit once more.

III. John Hall (1829-1899). The Presbyterian ministry has maintained its reputation for preachers of the best type, whose sermons, even when most brilliant, have rarely lacked in solid qualities. Weight as well as movement characterized, for example, the preaching of Dr. John Hall, who, after coming to America from Ireland, was for many years the pastor of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York. Gifted with not a little of the grace which has made his country so famous in the history of oratory, his direct and earnest discourses furnished noble examples of the sermon carefully prepared but delivered without the aid of a manuscript.

IV. T. De Witt Talmage (1832-1901). On the other hand, movement rather than weight distinguished the preaching of Dr. Thomas De Witt Talmage, whose ministry in Brooklyn attracted vast crowds, and whose sermons, printed week by week in many newspapers, reached multitudes more. He was a master of sensational rhetoric, who too easily mistook assertion for proof and illustration for argument; a scene-painter rather than an artist; a trafficker in words, who himself as much as any one of his hearers, was the victim of a florid and ill-balanced imagination.

In a couplet which is happier as prophecy than as poetry George Herbert sang in the seventeenth century :¹

¹ The Church Militant.

Religion stands on tiptoe in our land,
Ready to pass to the American strand.

We have already said that when this passage was safely accomplished the way in which religion expressed itself in the pulpit was distinctly original. The American sermon from the first showed few signs of its origin. The circumstances of daily life were all new, and here as elsewhere, the preacher adapted himself and his message to them. Now that we have surveyed American preaching, we may add that it has always been itself. The masters of the pulpit, such men as Edwards, Dwight, Lyman Beecher, Horace Bushnell, Phillips Brooks, are as really true to their times and land as were Chrysostom and Luther and Latimer. To this hour it continues to be the case that when an American minister occupies an English pulpit he is at once detected. He is less conventional than the preachers of the old country; "not so afraid to let himself go"; his illustrations are more frequent and more effective; his rhetoric is more studied, while his conversational tone is more familiar. The American pulpit is an independent force in the history of preaching.

i. It has been from the beginning a national power. This was noticeably the case on the eve of the American Revolution. The sermons of preachers North and South incited the people to resist the tyranny of King George III. They did much to determine the course of the Civil War. On Thanksgiving and fast days the sermon has been free to deal with great patriotic issues, and it has not hesitated to use its liberty. To-day it should continue to influence the national conscience in favor of civil service reform and political integrity.

2. The American pulpit has been active in the reformation of morals. Lyman Beecher's sermon on duelling did more to put that evil down than any act of the legislature. The cause of temperance now as never before commands the vast majority of the pulpits of the land. An attempt to tamper with the judiciary is defeated when the preachers of the State array themselves in protest against it.

3. From the beginning also the pulpit of this country has been an intellectual force. It was theology which first appealed to young Garfield at the plow, and his mind awakened among its stimulating themes. The practice, so long general, of choosing the presidents of colleges from the ranks of the ministry was due to the fact that they represented the best educated class in the community. Timothy Dwight was an intellectual power in his pulpit before he was called to be president of Yale College. Emerson, with a mind as keenly alert as any in the country, was at the first a Unitarian preacher. Longfellow, Bancroft, Lowell, Holmes, Whittier, were cradled in the arms of religion. Under the shadow of the New England meeting-house some of the finest minds in America have dawned. Many of our leading men of letters have been themselves "sons of the manse."

4. Still more has the American pulpit been a bulwark of the faith. The early theologians of America preached their theology. The history of religious thought during the last three centuries or more is a history of the pulpit. Dr. Lyman Beecher, as Austin Phelps says, "accomplished more for the evangelical faith in Boston by his bony sermons than by all other expedients of his

pulpit." He who would contend for the faith so as to reach the ear of the people must do so in the pulpit.

To sum up in a line: our conclusion from this sketch of American preaching is that the sermon which is needed among us to-day is the one which is true to the traditions of the national pulpit. We must demand from our ministers the preaching of righteousness on its true doctrinal basis, and with the very widest range of application.

XVI

CONCLUSION

IN this book we have been dealing not with the history of the Christian church but only of Christian preaching. Our chief concern has been with the pulpit not with the priest; with the preacher not with the pastor. For this reason our subject will be incomplete unless we say something of the preaching of men and women who have not exercised the priestly office or been ordained to the Christian ministry. We would not be understood as recognizing with any degree of approval the distinction which is often made between the clergyman and the layman. The whole history of preaching witnesses that when it comes to delivering the message of God to men such a distinction has no existence. Only for purposes of convenience have we any warrant in saying that as a preacher one man is a layman while another is ordained. Our concern is with the prophetic succession; and the prophet has always found his vocation and the warrant for it in the command of God. As he mused the divine fire has burned, and then he has spoken with his lips. Moses strikes the true note when he cries, "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets!" Job when he preached from his ash heap, and Solomon when he prayed at the dedication of the temple in Jerusalem, and Daniel as he witnessed for God in Babylon, and Nehemiah as he quickened the faith of the exiles when

once more the holy city became their home, were not priests. The prophets were often men of affairs on whom, perhaps at the plow or perhaps in the palace, the burden of the Lord rested. Daniel was a statesman; Amos "a herdman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit." The synagogue in the days of the apostles was more open to free speech than are our meeting-houses to-day. It was as one of themselves that Jesus stood up in the synagogue at Nazareth, and after reading the words of Isaiah to the friends and neighbors of his young life preached the good news of the kingdom. The early church pressed into the service of the pulpit any of its members who were qualified to speak. Let the layman teach, said the Apostolical Constitutions in the third century, "if he be skilled in the word and reverent in habit, for the Scripture says 'They shall all be taught of God.'"¹ In the missionary enterprises of the Middle Ages many of the most devoted and fearless evangelists who preached up and down Europe were laymen. Francis of Assisi did not wait for a license to preach before launching out on his great enterprise. A few words of earnest exhortation uttered by him as he passed from village to village, singing hymns of praise and saying to all he met, "Love and serve God and do worthy penance for your sins," this was his true ordination. Here he found his vocation. "I am as poor as you," he cried to the people, "I am one of yourselves. Christ, the very Christ of God, has sent me with a message to you. Listen!" The preaching friars were distinct from the priests, and it was they who, in so many cases, heralded the

¹ Hatch, "Organization of the Early Christian Churches," Lecture V.

new and brighter era. Nicholas of Berne, the chief in the little society called "Friends of God," was an itinerant evangelist.¹ He and his associates were reformers before the Reformation. Many of them were obscure, and, indeed, unless dragged to prison or to the stake, unknown. "The streams which turn the mill clappers of the world," says the old proverb, "often rise in solitary places." The "simple preachers" of Wycliffe were many of them laymen. "Go and preach," was his word to them; "it is the sublimest work. But imitate not the priests, whom we see after the sermon sitting in the alehouses or at the gaming table or wasting their time in hunting. Visit the sick, the aged, the poor, the lame."

When the Reformation came, laymen found their work in reading from the chained Bible in the parish churches, and to this more than to any preaching by the priests must we ascribe the familiarity with Scripture which is so remarkable in Shakespeare, and which implied familiarity too on the part of the playgoers of his time.

During the struggle between the king and the Parliament which ended when Charles I. was beheaded, the right of laymen to preach was fiercely denied and fervently asserted. The satirist jeered at "Green the felt-maker, Martin the button-maker, Spencer the coachman, Rodgers the glover," when they took to exhorting. Lay preaching spread so rapidly through the army that in 1645 Parliament passed a resolution silencing any but ordained preachers or candidates for the ministry.²

¹ Telford, "A History of Lay Preaching in the Christian Church," p. 69.

² *Ibid.*, p. 83.

But Cromwell both preached himself and took up the cudgels on behalf of the laymen. To the governor of Edinburgh Castle he wrote: "You say you have just cause to regret that men of civil employment should usurp the calling and employment of the ministry, to the scandal of the reformed kirk. Are you troubled that Christ is preached? Is preaching so exclusively your function? Where do you find in the Scriptures a ground to warrant such an assertion?" When the Pilgrims made their home in Holland it was to the Bible that they appealed in defense of lay preaching. With them the "liberty of prophesying" crossed the ocean, and much of the early preaching in New England must have been of this character. The Baptists were prominent as lay preachers.¹ Among them it was lawful for any person to improve his gifts in the presence of the congregation. The history of the Society of Friends is a history of most effective lay preaching. George Fox, "the man with the leather breeches," traveled with his message over England, Wales, and Ireland, and then through other countries of Europe, and by and by reached America. Ultimately he organized his preachers in circuits so that ministers might not "go in heaps" to one meeting and leave the others uncared for.² Women as well as men spoke at the Quaker meetings. Under the powerful exhortation of Rebecca Collins (1696), the objections of John Locke, the philosopher, who heard her in company with King William III, disappeared. "Women, indeed," he wrote to her afterwards, "had the honor first to publish the resurrection

¹ Cobb, "Rise of Religious Liberty in America," p. 142.

² Telford, p. 109.

of the Spirit of Love. And let all the disciples rejoice therein, as doth your partner, John Locke." The Society of Friends has ever since then been ministered to by women, many of them of rare sweetness and fervor. When Elizabeth Fry visited Newgate prison the dreary jail seemed bathed in heavenly sunshine, and one of her hearers declared that never before or since had he "listened to one who had so thoroughly imbibed the Master's spirit or been taught by him the persuasive power of pleading with sinners for the life of their own souls."

Susannah Wesley, the mother of the Wesleys, when her husband was away in London, set the example, which the Methodists were afterward slow to sanction, of lay preaching. She gathered her family and her neighbors during the winter evenings in the rectory kitchen, and talked to them about religion. It was she who defended Thomas Maxfield, the companion and servant of Charles Wesley, when he began to preach. "John," she said to her son, "take care what you do with respect to that young man, for he is as surely called of God to preach as you are." The local preachers, men who came from the field, the shop, and the office to fill their appointments on the circuit plan, have continued to be one of the mainstays of Methodism. A revival of the order is imperatively needed at the present time in the churches of Protestant Christendom.

The Haldanes, Robert and James, were powerful lay preachers who began their work in Scotland in the early years of the nineteenth century,¹ and although banned by the General Assembly carried their message

¹ Telford, p. 191.

from one end of the land to the other. Robert Haldane educated three hundred young men as evangelists, and at Geneva, in Switzerland, powerfully affected the students of the university by his exposition of the Epistle to the Romans, and numbered among his disciples Frederick Monod and Merle d'Aubigné.

The Salvation Army of our own time is a triumph of lay agency. It was under her husband's preaching that Mrs. Booth, "the greatest woman preacher of our generation" received her commission.¹ The McAll Mission in France has owed much to lay evangelists, and in the eyes of the Roman Catholic Church has, of course, been entirely extra-ecclesiastical. The impulse to speak, when once it comes on the man with a message, cannot wait to parley as to priestly ordination. Passing through a London Park one Sunday afternoon, Robert Browning was disturbed by the wild invective of an infidel speaker, and mounting the bench from which he had been haranguing, addressed the crowd on the truths of Christianity in a most convincing manner. No doubt there were many in that audience who would never read a line of his poetry and yet were affected by the earnest force of his impromptu preaching.

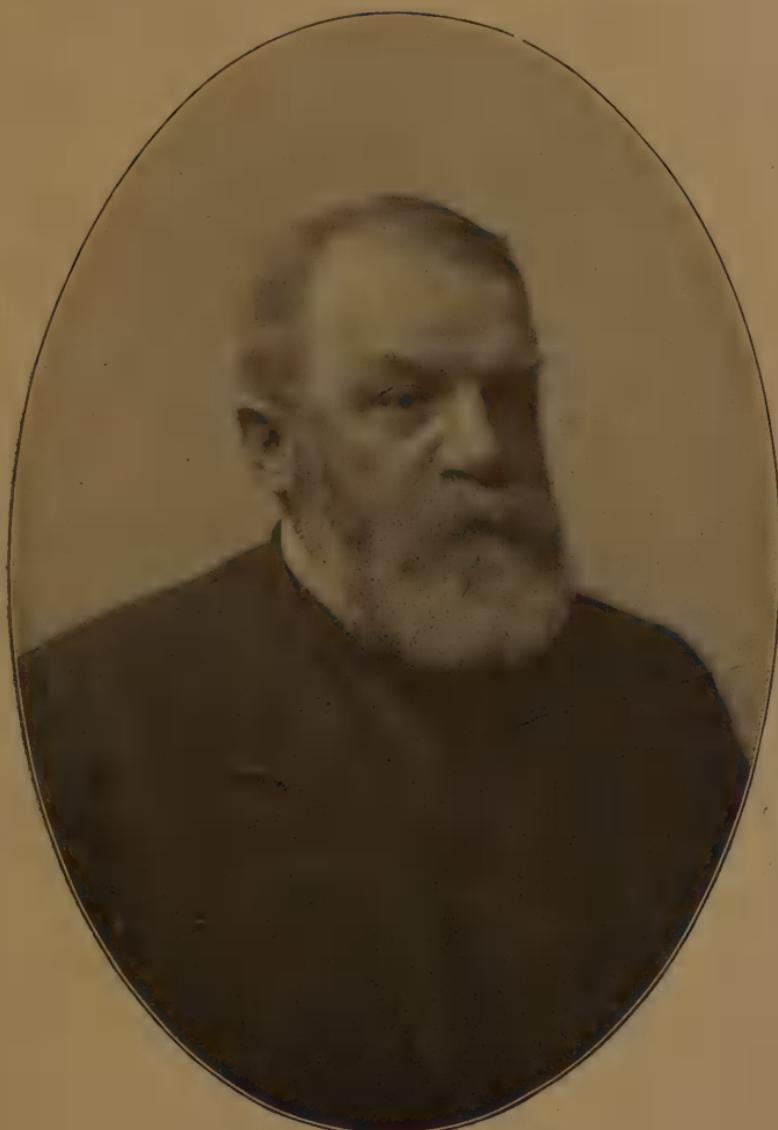
We have seen that in America the evangelist or traveling preacher did a work which no one else could do. He prepared the way, in many parts of the country only lately occupied, for the organized church and the settled pastor. The pioneers were men specially fitted for their work. Their license to preach, if they carried one, was of less moment to them than their possession of a divine call. They anticipated the

¹ Telford, p. 175.

institutions of learning and were not ashamed to be known as "graduates of Brush College and fellows of Swamp University." As the land became more thickly peopled, and as schools were established and churches built, the evangelist did not disappear. He was still in demand for special revival work and was in a measure the successor of the preaching friar and the missioner of earlier days and other lands. At times he came into conflict with the ordained minister settled over a local church.¹ He broke away from the conventionalities of the pulpit, and discarded time-honored usages, and defied the ecclesiastical traditions which others held sacred. Here was the old experience of the prophet and the priest in a fresh setting. This, however, was not by any means general. As time passed on the churches and the ministers came to recognize the work of the evangelist and (sometimes only too readily) to avail themselves of his services.

D. L. Moody (1837-1899). The most notable of American lay preachers, is Dwight L. Moody. Born in the Massachusetts village of Northfield, he went into business in Boston and Chicago, and gradually, by the way of the Young Men's Christian Association and the Christian Commission during the Civil War, found his true vocation and the work to which he devoted his strenuous life. "The greatest struggle I ever had in my life," he said, "was when I gave up business." But in its wider sense he never did give up business. He made a business of evangelizing. As the calls on his services grew he grew with them. In Chicago, in Boston, in New York, in many other great cities of the Union he held

¹ Austin Phelps, "Men and Books," p. 33.



DWIGHT L. MOODY

immense meetings, calling the unchurched classes to repentance, and organizing the churches themselves for aggressive Christian work. He went to England, and accompanied by Ira D. Sankey, the singer, took the Old World by storm. "Our bishops," said the London "Telegraph," "have back of them a State income, great cathedrals, a small army of paid helpers and musicians, but where our bishops have reached tens this man has reached hundreds." One sketch of his preaching will serve to give its salient features.¹ He is lecturing on "Jacob." The reporter said :

Headlong talking would describe it. His voice is rough, pitched on one key, and he speaks straight before him, rarely turning to the sides. But how real he makes the man! How visibly the deceiving, scheming Jacob stands before us! And how pointedly he applies the lessons of the patriarch's life to the men and women before him. His gestures are few but emphatic—the hand flung forcibly forward with palm open, both hands brought down, hammer-like, with closed fists. But the Bible is too much in his hands to allow frequent gestures. He continually refers to it, reads from it and keeps it open on the stand before him. His sermon or lecture is little more than an exposition of a Bible truth or a dramatic rendering of a Bible story with continuous application to his hearers.

Moody's schooling had been of the scantiest, and he was a slow scholar, but his vocabulary of telling Saxon words was large, and it was used with a directness and conviction which added immensely to its efficiency. It seemed made for his creed, which was itself simple, practical, and sufficient for his purpose. He had a kind of audacious genius in his definition. Conversion was "right about face"; and so on through the articles of

¹ "Life," by W. R. Moody.

his faith. Probably since John Bunyan no man has talked better Saxon. And at times, although rarely, his language had much of Bunyan's pathetic beauty: "Earth recedes," he said to his son, as he lay dying; "heaven opens before me. No, this is no dream, Will. It is beautiful. It is like a trance. If this is death, it is sweet. There is no valley here. God is calling me, and I must go."¹

He taught ministers that their vocation was a business. His tact, his organizing skill, his executive ability, his courage and resolution, and the unerring precision with which he went at the point and conquered it, were such qualities as men value in commercial pursuits, but use too little in the great business of religion. To many others his example and influence were what they were to the Rev. F. B. Meyer, "the birth time of new conceptions of ministry, new methods of work, new inspirations and hopes." His straightforward plainness was a great source of power with him. One felt that this man had no second thought. All was on the surface. It was transparent and sincere. "The simplicity of that man's preaching," said Lord Cairns, the Lord Chancellor of England, "the clear manner in which he sets forth salvation by Christ, is to me the most striking and the most delightful thing I ever knew in my life."

In common with all true preachers of the gospel of Jesus he was rich in sympathy. Henry Drummond (b. 1851), whose name should not be mentioned without tribute to his own wonderful career as an evangelist to the cultured classes—touches on this point when he

¹ "Life," p. 552.

writes : "If eloquence is measured by its effect upon an audience, and not by its balanced sentences and cumulative periods, then this is eloquence of the highest sort. In sheer persuasiveness Mr. Moody has few equals, and rugged as his preaching may seem to some, there is in it a pathos of a quality which few orators have ever reached, and an appealing tenderness which not only wholly redeems it, but raises it, not unseldom almost to sublimity."

The mention of Henry Drummond reminds us of the great influence which Moody exerted over young men. The Students' Volunteer movement owed much to his inspiring addresses. Multitudes of college men heard from him the words which revealed to them the glory and grandeur of a life of Christian consecration. The annual gatherings of students at Northfield, amid buildings which he himself had reared and devoted to education, and in the village whose wide streets, lined with ancestral elms and broad prospects of the historic Connecticut River, he had made famous the world over, were memorable in the history of the religious life of many a young man, who never recalls the critical period in his religious career without associating with it these summer conferences.

At the Jubilee of Charles H. Spurgeon in 1884, Mr. Moody, who was then conducting meetings in London, uttered words in reference to the great preacher which might with equal fitness be applied to himself :

Let me say this, if God can use Mr. Spurgeon, why should he not use the rest of us, and why should we not all just lay ourselves at the Master's feet, and say to him, "Send me, use me"? It is not Mr. Spurgeon who does the work, after all ; it is God. He

is as weak as any other man apart from his Lord. Moses was nothing, but Moses' God was almighty. Samson was nothing when he lost his strength ; but when it came back to him, then he was a mighty man ; and so, dear friends, bear in mind that if we can just link our weakness to God's strength we can go forth and be a blessing in the world. I want to say to you, Mr. Spurgeon, God bless you ! I have read your sermons for twenty-five years. You are never going to die. John Wesley lives more to-day than when he was in the flesh ; Whitefield lives more to-day than when he was on this earth ; John Knox lives more to-day than at any other period of his life ; and Martin Luther, who has been gone over three hundred years, still lives. Bear in mind friends, that our dear brother is to live forever. We may never meet together again in the flesh ; but, by the blessing of God, I will meet you up yonder.

F Our study of the history of Christian preaching must have convinced us that here as elsewhere there is a variety of gifts ; that here as elsewhere "God fulfills himself in many ways." The preacher is not only affected by the age in which he lives, the country to which he belongs, and the church of which he is a member, but also by his own personality. To his own self he is bound to be true.

1. There have been preachers in whom the orator was predominant: men of sublime conception, vivid imagination and quick sympathies. Chrysostom and Massillon and Robert Hall were emphatically orators.

2. At the opposite extreme to such men we shall find the preacher who is by temperament and training a thinker. He lives a life the quietness and obscurity of which must not deceive us as to its influence. He stimulates men of whom the world hears more than it does of him. It is of such an one, John Foster, that Dr. Austin Phelps says,¹ "He could not hold his own

¹ "My Note Book," p. 84.

congregation, yet he has preached in metropolitan pulpits to charmed audiences through the lips of men of the magnetic order, and of suasive faculty. Like Aaron, the Levite, they could 'speak well,' but it was John Foster who roused and fructified their thinking power." To this class belong such men as Vinet and Bushnell and Martineau, whose influence was infinitely wider than any congregation ever gathered about their pulpits.

3. A third group of preachers, the largest of all, comprises the men who are emphatically messengers. The orator is tempted to speak from love of oratory; the thinker uses language only as a medium for the thoughts with which he himself is enamored; but the messenger speaks because he has to deliver the word of the Lord.

Sometimes he recalls to us the form of the prophet. Savonarola, Edward Irving, Christmas Evans, were such men. At other times he is rather the evangelist, possessed with the idea that the gospel has to be preached, and loyal to Rowland Hill's definition of it: "No sermon is of any value or likely to be useful which has not the three R's in it—Ruin by the Fall; Redemption by Christ; Regeneration by the Holy Spirit." The evangelist's temperament is impulsive and uneven, his methods are simple and direct, his resources limited, but, so far as they go, effective. Whitefield, great, of course, as an orator, was a representative of this type of pioneer; so was John Berridge; so was Rowland Hill; so was the famous "Billy Dawson," the most eloquent of lay preachers; and so was Father Taylor, the Boston sailors' chaplain, whose boundless sympathy and vivid imagination attracted Charles Dickens and won the admiration of Doctor Channing.

4. Combining the excellencies of all these we mention the Christian teacher. He does not neglect the oratorical gift which may win him a readier hearing; and he also appreciates the worth of quiet study which will give to his ministry the respect of thoughtful men. But he is supremely anxious to deliver his message as the expression of the word and will of God himself. To this class belong such preachers as F. W. Robertson, Alexander MacLaren, Phillips Brooks, and John A. Broadus. The tendency at the present time is in the direction of the preacher as a Christian teacher. Our study of the history of the pulpit has, we may hope, convinced us that gathering what is best in each of these classes we must not overlook the province of oratory or of study, any more than the imperative call to us in our ministry to do the work of an evangelist. To us belong the lessons of the fruitful past. We are in the line of the prophetic succession. In the history which we have been following all things indeed are ours; but they are ours to use for the glory of God, for the service of the world, and for the fulfillment of the Great Commission: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

A CHRONOLOGY OF PREACHERS

FIRST CENTURY:

Clement, b. (uncertain).
Polycarp, b. 90.

SECOND CENTURY:

Justin Martyr, b. 120.
Clement, Alex., b. 150.
Tertullian, b. 170.
Origen, b. 180.

THIRD CENTURY:

Cyprian, b. 200.
Athanasius, b. 297.

FOURTH CENTURY:

Ulfilas, b. 311.
Martin of Tours, b. 316.
Basil, b. 330.
Gregory Nazianzen, b. 330.
Ambrose, b. 340.
Jerome, b. 341.
Chrysostom, b. 347.
Augustine, b. 354.
Patrick, b. about 372.
Leo the Great, b. about 390.

FIFTH CENTURY:

Leo the Great made pope, 440.

SIXTH CENTURY:

Columba, b. 521.
Gregory (I.) the Great, b. 540.
Augustine (Canterbury), b. about 566

SEVENTH CENTURY:

Bede, b. 673.
Boniface, b. 689.

NINTH CENTURY:

Anschar, b. 801.

TENTH CENTURY:

Adalbert, b. 997.

ELEVENTH CENTURY:

Hildebrand (Gregory VII.), b. about 1013.
Peter the Hermit, b. 1050.
Abelard, b. 1079.
Bernard of Clairvaux, b. 1091.

TWELFTH CENTURY:

Arnold of Brescia, b. 1100.
Bernard of Clugny, b. 1100.
Dominic, b. 1170.
Francis of Assisi, b. 1182.
Anthony of Padua, 1198.

THIRTEENTH CENTURY:

Bonaventura, b. 1201.
Berthold of Ratisbon, b. 1215.
Aquinus, b. 1225.
Berthold of Regensberg, b. 1272.

FOURTEENTH CENTURY:

Tauler, b. 1300.
Wycliffe, b. 1324.
Huss, b. 1369.
Jerome of Prague, b. about 1375.
Bernardino of Siena, b. 1380.
A Kempis, b. 1381.

FIFTEENTH CENTURY:

Savonarola, b. 1452.
Colet, b. 1466.
Hubmaier, b. 1480.
Luther, b. 1483.
Zwingli, b. 1484.
Farel, b. 1489.
Latimer, b. about 1490.

SIXTEENTH CENTURY:

Knox, b. 1505.
Xavier, b. 1506.
Calvin, b. 1509.
Wishart, b. 1513.
Gilpin, b. 1517.
Beza, b. 1519.
Smith (Henry), b. 1550.
Hooker, b. 1553-1554.
Andrewes, Lancelot, b. 1555.
Francis de Sales, b. 1567.
Donne, b. 1573.
Hall, Joseph, b. 1574.
Dickson, David, b. 1583.
Adams, Thomas, b. about 1585.
Cotton, John, b. 1585.

Hooker, Thomas (N. E.), b. 1586.
 Herbert, George, b. 1593.
 Davenport, b. 1597.
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY:
 Goodwin, b. 1600.
 Rutherford, b. 1600.
 Livingston, John, b. 1603.
 Eliot, John, b. 1604.
 Williams, Roger, b. 1606.
 Fuller, Thomas, b. 1608.
 Leighton, b. 1611.
 Taylor, Jeremy, b. 1613.
 Baxter, b. 1615.
 Owen, b. 1616.
 Claude, b. 1619.
 Du Bosc, b. 1623.
 Bossuet, b. 1627.
 Bunyan, b. 1628.
 Barrow, Isaac, b. 1630.
 Tillotson, b. 1630.
 Howe, b. 1630.
 Flechier, b. 1632.
 Bourdaloue, b. 1632.
 Stillingfleet, b. 1635.
 South, b. 1638.
 Mather, Increase, b. 1639.
 Fénelon, b. 1657.
 Henry, Matthew, b. 1662.
 Massillon, b. 1663.
 Swift, b. 1667.
 Mather, Cotton, b. 1668.
 Watts, b. 1674.
 Boston, Thomas, b. 1676.
 Saurin, b. 1677.
 Erskine, Ebenezer, b. 1680.
 Erskine, Ralph, b. 1685.
 Butler, Joseph, b. 1692.
 Maclaurin, b. 1693.
 Gill, b. 1697.
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY:
 Doddridge, b. 1702.
 Edwards, Jonathan, b. 1703.
 Wesley, John, b. 1703.
 Tennent, Gilbert, b. about 1703.
 Tennent, William, b. 1705.
 Wesley, Charles, b. 1708.
 Grimshaw, b. 1708.
 Sterne, b. 1713.
 Romaine, b. 1714.
 Harvey, b. 1714.
 Whitefield, b. 1714.
 Berridge, b. 1716.

Blair, b. 1718.
 Erskine, John, b. 1721.
 Witherspoon, b. 1722.
 Venn, Henry, b. 1724.
 Newton, b. 1725.
 Fletcher of Madely, b. 1729.
 Priestley, Joseph, b. 1733.
 Robinson, R., b. 1735.
 Paley, b. 1743.
 Hill, Rowland, b. 1744.
 Emmons, b. 1745.
 Scott, Th., b. 1747.
 Coke, Thomas, b. 1747.
 Cecil, b. 1748.
 Dwight, b. 1752.
 Kirwan, b. 1754.
 Fuller, Andrew, b. 1754.
 Simeon, b. 1758.
 Carey, b. 1761.
 Hall, Robert, b. 1764.
 Evans, Christmas, b. 1766.
 Schleiermacher, b. 1768.
 Jay, W., b. 1769.
 Mason, b. 1770.
 Foster, John, b. 1770.
 Smith, Sydney, b. 1771.
 Alexander, Arch., b. 1772.
 Beecher, Lyman, b. 1775.
 Bunting, b. 1779.
 Chalmers, Thomas, b. 1780.
 Channing, b. 1780.
 Watson, Richard, b. 1781.
 Cone, Spencer, b. 1785.
 James, J. Angell, b. 1785.
 Malan, Cæsar, b. 1787.
 Krummacher, b. 1790.
 Hinton, J. H., b. 1791.
 Finney, b. 1792.
 Irving, Edward, b. 1792.
 Monod, F., b. 1794.
 D'Aubigné, b. 1794.
 Arnold, Th., b. 1795.
 Coquerel, A. L. C. (*fls.* 1818), b. 1795.
 Hodge, C., b. 1795.
 Hare, Julius C., b. 1796.
 Wayland, F., b. 1796.
 Vinet, b. 1797.
 Binney, b. 1798.
 Tholuck, b. 1799.
NINETEENTH CENTURY:
 Melvill, b. 1800.
 Pusey, b. 1800.

Parsons, James, b. 1800.	Cairns, b. 1818.
Tyng, Stephen, b. 1800.	Arthur, W., b. 1819.
Newman, b. 1801.	Kingsley, C., b. 1819.
Monod, A., b. 1802.	Caird, b. 1820.
Bushnell, b. 1802.	Storrs, R. S., b. 1821.
Lacordaire, b. 1802.	Magee, b. 1821.
Guthrie, b. 1803.	Cuyler, Theo. L., b. 1822.
Williams, W. R., b. 1804.	Stanford, C., b. 1823.
Fuller, Richard, b. 1804.	Collyer, Robert, b. 1823.
Maurice, b. 1805.	Luthardt, b. 1823.
Wilberforce, b. 1805.	Pressensé, b. 1824.
Martineau, b. 1805.	Punshon, b. 1824.
Candlish, b. 1806.	MacLaren, b. 1826.
Manning, b. 1808.	Broadus, J. A., b. 1827.
Gavazzi, b. 1809.	Hyachinthe (Loysen), b. 1827.
Parker, Theodore, b. 1810.	Liddon, b. 1829.
Clarke, Freeman, b. 1810.	Taylor, W. M., b. 1829.
Simpson, b. 1811.	Hall, John, b. 1829.
Macleod, N., b. 1812.	Dale, R. W., b. 1829.
Mozley, b. 1813.	Parker, Joseph, b. 1830.
Beecher, H. W., b. 1813.	Bersier, b. 1831.
Hamilton, James, b. 1814,	Talimage, b. 1832.
Church, b. 1815.	Christlieb, b. 1833.
Stanley, b. 1815.	Spurgeon, b. 1834.
Robinson, E. G., b. 1815.	Brooks, Phillips, b. 1836.
Robertson, F. W., b. 1816.	Didon, b. 1840.
Vaughan, C. J., b. 1816.	

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